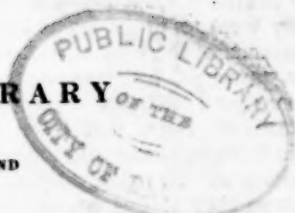


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ART. I.—REPLY TO PROFESSOR POND'S ARTICLE ON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS.

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THE observations and experience of three years at the head of a Voluntary Society, first led me to suspect the soundness of the voluntary principle. The course of events of the subsequent seven years, together with careful and thorough investigation, have confirmed all of my former apprehensions, and brought me to the full belief that, in secular as well as in sacred concerns, it is fraught with mischief. It assumes the independence of man, and invests him with self-sovereignty. Traced to its source, it originates in Pelagianism in religion, and the worst forms of Jacobinism in politics. It promises union, but it is the mother of discord. It pretends to love and good-will; but, as it is the offspring of pride, it generates ambition, and ends in despotism. Whenever it has had amongst ourselves full scope, and time sufficient to develope itself fully, we can trace its progress by the wreck of laws and usages, and principles which have proceeded from the wisdom of ages, and the authority of God.

When, therefore, the author of the "Inquiry respecting Voluntary Societies," which appeared in this work in the No. Vol. V.

for March last, submitted his papers to my inspection, before they went to press, I was prepared to appreciate the importance of the subject, and to enter into his views, and feel the power of his reasonings, and to justify its main positions; and to advise its publication. It is therefore a matter of course, that I should bear with him the burden, which his opinions and the avowal of them, imposes on his shoulders. Of these, the animadversions of Dr. Pond in the last number of this work, are the most onerous which have as yet been laid upon him; and these are "grievous to be borne," not so much on account of their intrinsic weight, as in consideration of the person from whom they proceeded, and some of the qualities by which they are distinguished. The spirit and manner of his piece, afford ample evidence, that the "voluntary principle," whatever else it may do towards human perfectability, does not dispose and enable its warmest admirers and abettors to "give a reason of the hope that is in them in *meekness and fear*;" and that, however tolerant it renders its disciples to all denominations of men, it will not patiently endure dissent from its own supremacy and infallibility.

Dr. Pond's article purports to be a reply to our author's; but it is so only in part. The voluntary principle, and not this or that voluntary society, is the subject treated by our author, and Dr. Pond undertakes to answer him and explode his doctrines, by a defence of a select few religious voluntary societies, and that not so much on the ground of the principles of their construction, as on that of the benefits resulting from their practical operation. The voluntary principle works well, in these societies, and therefore it is a good and safe principle, is about the amount of Dr. Pond's reply. If one were to defend universal suffrage, by showing that the right of voting worked well in the landed proprietors and farmers of New-England, he would pretty closely imitate Dr. Pond's proceeding in the present case. I do not say that he has precisely and exclusively followed this method, but that he has done so mainly. As, however, Dr. Pond has chosen his own ground, whereon to contend for the voluntary principle, I am prepared to follow him; although our author himself is under no obligation to do it. He discussed a general principle, and showed that as a principle of universal application, and as developed in various societies, it is unsound and dangerous. If Dr. Pond had met him fairly, he

should have espoused the opposite side "for better or for worse."

The great principle for which we contend, and in so far as the subject relates to the Church of Christ, and which Dr. Pond has in various ways impugned, is—that *ecclesiastical works ought to be performed in an ecclesiastical way.*

The truth of this proposition is so obvious, and the reasonableness and propriety of its universal observance in all the affairs of the church so indisputable, that Dr. Pond is constrained to admit it, although in doing so he gives up the main position which he labours to support. Thus, on pp. 399, 400, he says:

"The grand objection to the right of forming voluntary societies for religious purposes, is grounded on a false assumption. It takes for granted that the societies are *separate* from the church, and *independent* of it; whereas their connexion with it is *most intimate*, and *their dependence entire*. They cannot move, but as the church moves them; nor farther or faster than she moves them. Their acts are virtually the acts of the Church. They are the organization, the instrument, through which, for the sake of efficiency, the *Church chooses to act* in accomplishing the work which has been given her to do. No consistent advocate of voluntary societies insists upon the right to set up institutions *out of* the Church, and *independent of it*, with which to accomplish the Church's work."

If these declarations of Dr. Pond, and many others of similar import which will readily occur to our attentive readers, are to be taken in their plain and obvious meaning, it is most evident that we have no controversy with him as to the great *principle* which it was the aim of our former article to state and defend, and we wonder that he should have any with us.

Before passing to the question of fact in this case, we will for a moment inquire of Dr. Pond, why those societies which, as he affirms, are connected most intimately with the Church, and dependent on it entirely, should not in a *formal manner* be subject to the oversight and direction of the Church? If they are *virtually* in the Church, and dependent on it, as he insists they are, why should they not be *formally* so? If a woman is *virtually* the wife of a man, "most intimately connected with him, dependant on him, and subject to him," is it not "orderly and best" that she should be

formally so; be *lawfully* married and be called a wife, and take the name of her husband, and behave as other married women do?

We proceed to the question of fact. Dr. Pond asserts that these societies are in and under the Church, because they were instituted and sustained, and managed chiefly by church members. "The Church is identical with its embodied members.—Hence may not the Church be said to do whatever, of a public religious nature, its members do? And may it not justly be held responsible for whatever it favours, or so much as tolerates in its members?" p. 398. How is this? The Church *identical* with its members, and yet separate from its members so as to have authority *over* its members, and be responsible for the conduct of its members! How can this be? Just above the passage under consideration, Dr. Pond says—"From the manner in which some persons speak of the Church, it might be supposed to be a *substance*, an *essence* of itself, of which its members were but the accidents, and which might very well exist, if not flourish, without members. But this is all an illusion of words." Verily, Dr. Pond is in the same predicament with these victims of an "illusion of words." For, if the Church be not something distinct from its members, how can *it* be responsible for the conduct of *its* members, except on the absurd supposition that the members are members of themselves, and thus responsible to themselves? "The Church identical with its members!" Yet Dr. Pond, after mentioning that the voluntary associations formed for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, are composed to a great extent of church members, adds, "had the Church merely looked on and tolerated her members in the forming and the sustaining of these societies, she would have become connected with them and responsible for them. But to her honour be it said, she has encouraged and patronized the societies, &c." But *who* is this that has thus approved of church members forming and sustaining these societies, and, as he afterwards says, "has made them *her own*?" What substance or essence is it? Who or where is this benignant mother of good works, whom he calls the Church? "From the manner in which some persons speak of the Church, it might be supposed to be a *substance*, an *essence* of itself, of which its members were but the accidents, and which might very well exist, if not flourish, without mem-

bers. But this is all an illusion of words." We could not dispose of Dr. Pond's argument more effectually than he has done it for himself.

Our reviewer further contends that the societies in question, are subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction and controul, because, as he affirms on pp. 411, 412, "*The directors of our benevolent societies are responsible, individually and directly, to the respective churches of which they are members. They are responsible for their official acts.*" These are Dr. Pond's own words, and he wishes us to take particular notice of this statement, for he prefixes to it the solemn intensive, "I repeat it."

It is not, then, an inadvertent and unweighed assertion. But, we must confess, that it is a new idea to us, and we venture to say, that it is to our readers also. The particular churches of Boston and vicinity, for example, are the authorized visiters of the Executive Committee, and Secretaries and Treasurer of the A. B. C. F. M., and of the American Education Society! So Dr. Pond lays down the law. "They are directly responsible for their official acts to the churches of which they are members." If there is any meaning or force in this language, it invests those churches with all the prerogatives and powers of *visitors*, in the technical sense of the term. We shall leave this legal opinion of Dr. Pond in the hands of the Hon. Samuel Hubbard, of Boston; barely subjoining that if he had taken counsel of that gentleman, he would not so much as have given him the most distant intimations of a notion of that sort, much less have announced it with so great solemnity. The only remaining argument which I can find, after a thorough search, in support of Dr. Pond's assertion that these societies are *de facto* in and under the Church, is that they are dependent on the free contributions of the churches, and may therefore be estopped at will. But if this method of controuling institutions of the magnitude, dignity, and power which the Bible, Missionary, Education, and Tract Societies possess, was of easy and ready application, whenever occasion should require, as all experience proves that it is not in all cases of a similar nature; yet it is a means of the last resort, and justifiable only in cases of the most flagrant corruption, and when there is no hope of amendment. The use of this remedy for abuses, supposes that the parties to be affected by it are inaccessible by any other means, and

regardless of any other considerations. Like felons and lunatics, they are to be treated with bread and water, and brought to terms by starvation. We do not wish to be put on this footing with the managers of our sacred charities, and the conductors of our "works of faith, and labours of love" in behalf of a perishing world. When they err in judgement, or yield to temptation, we desire the liberty and authority which Christ has given to his Church, to rectify and restore them in "the spirit of meekness." The "flinging in of a certificate," as the phrase is in Connecticut, is of ill-savour, and never resorted to by reputable and pious men except in extreme cases.

Moreover, the mode proposed by Dr. Pond of withholding contribution, will ultimately fall, not on the managers of these societies, but on those who are supported by their funds and benefited by them. If Dr. Pond had well considered the matter, he would have waived this argument; for we cannot believe that he would punish the innocent, and deprive the heathen abroad, and the destitute at home, of the bread of life, in order to chastize and coerce defaulters in office at head-quarters. From his lack of due reflection also, we infer his misconception and misuse of our author's declaration on p. 39. "In seeking to reform the charities of the Church, we are not destructionists. In seeking to cure, we should not kill." And on p. 123, "Meanwhile we repeat, what we have already said, that in attempting to reform the charities of the Church, we design to give them under their present arrangement our cordial support, so far as we in conscience approve of the objects at which they aim. We would not abolish, in attempting to amend." Dr. Pond taxes our author with inconsistency, and surmises that he felt the flinches of misgiving as to the great principle which he was defending, because he was not disposed to fall on the voluntary societies, in the mode allowed of by Dr. Pond, and exterminate them root and branch because, in point of form and order, they are irregularly constituted, and irresponsibly administered. We have never suspected Dr. Pond of being an Abolitionist; his inability, however, to perceive the wisdom and benevolence of tolerating existing evils until they can be safely removed, rather than extirpating them at all hazards, is in keeping with the theory and practise of that kill-or-cure school. We will not pursue this point farther than to refer our readers to the remarks of our author,

on pp. 106, 107, which Dr. Pond has neither disproved nor even noticed.

We trust that we have evinced that Dr. Pond fails entirely in his attempt to show that the religious voluntary societies are *de facto* Church institutions, and under her supervision and control. And, according to his own admission, that "no consistent advocate of voluntary societies, insists upon the right to set up institutions out of the Church, and independent of it, with which to accomplish the Church's work, (p. 400,) he must produce other and better evidence than any to be found in the article before us, or take his choice of the alternative which he himself has proposed, and become either self-convicted of inconsistency, or confess that the institutions in question are incapable of vindication.

But Dr. Pond's ardour in the cause of the voluntary system leads him still to vindicate them, even at the expense of consistency with himself. For, after labouring to make it evident, even to a demonstration, that these societies are to all intents and purposes Church organizations—instruments by which "the Church chooses to act," he presents a formal and elaborate defence of the proposition, *that it is the right of Christians to form voluntary societies for religious purposes*. Here he finds it convenient to omit the qualifying clauses which he annexed to those institutions which a *consistent advocate* of voluntary societies will alone defend, viz., that they are not "out of the Church and independent of it." That it may clearly appear that we do not either misapprehend or pervert the meaning or the language of Dr. Pond, we will quote him at length. On pp. 399, 400, "No consistent advocate insists upon the right to set up institutions, out of the Church, and independent of it, with which to accomplish the Church's work; but it is contended, that the Church may operate in more ways than one, and that it is her *right*, and in particular cases, may be her *duty*, to operate through the medium of voluntary societies. In proof of the *right* to form voluntary societies for religious purposes, it may be urged, first, that this is the natural right of Christians; a right which they are to be presumed to possess, unless they are prohibited in the gospel. What can be plainer, than that it is the right of Christians, and their *duty*, to do all the good they can, and by every consistent method in their power? They have a right to do good as individuals; and if an object of magnitude comes

before them, they have a right to associate others with them, and to any extent that may be needfull." We appeal to every attentive reader, if Dr. Pond does not here assert that Christians as *individuals* possess the natural right, and are under obligations, both singly and jointly, and that to any extent, to engage in religious works, and establish religious institutions.—If now Christians as *individuals* may proceed thus, it follows irresistibly that they have "the right to set up institutions out of the Church and independent of it," which Dr. Pond says "no consistent advocate of voluntary societies insists upon." There is no escape for Dr. Pond from his own net, except by the help of his extraordinary supposition, that the "church is identical with its members." On that supposition it is no doubt true, *that each individual Christian is the Church*, and consequently all that is done by Christians, either singly or jointly, is done by the Church. In his solicitude lest his readers should miss this favourite conception of his own mind, that "the Church is identical with its members," he proceeds to illustrate it in so plain a manner that he who runs may read. "A pious student, is requested in a destitute village, to institute a sabbath school. Is he not at liberty to do this directly, and *of his own accord*? Or must he first write to the church of which he is a member, and obtain a formal commission from them? may he not take a fellow-student with him, or more than one, and if expenses accrue and the school becomes large and laborious, may not a society be formed among the students of the college or seminary to which he belongs, for the purpose of sustaining it? Here the voluntary principle is fully developed. Here is a society instituted, and engaged in performing the Church's work; or rather through its instrumentality, *the Church is performing its own work*." It seems then beyond all doubt, that, according to Dr. Pond, an individual Christian, without the knowledge, consent, approbation, or authority of the Church of which he is a member, may of his own accord, assume and fulfil the work and obligations of the Church; may of his own will set up an "institution out of the Church and independent of it;" and he reconciles this with his previous admission, that "no consistent advocate of voluntary societies insists upon the right" by his magnetic transfusion of the Church into each and all of her members, and his mystical indentification of the Church with each individual Christian. By this new appli-

cation of the doctrine of "transubstantiation," Dr. Pond can make a Church as easily as a Popish priest can make a Christ.

We will advance now to an examination of the reasons adduced by Dr. Pond in support of the position which he has actually defended, *that Christians may set up institutions out of the Church and independent of it, to perform the Church's work.*

His first argument is, "that this is a *natural right* of Christians." But from what code or charter this right is deduced we are utterly ignorant. Christianity is not a natural, but a positive, special, supernatural institution, and consequently, all the rights, immunities, privileges and obligations which it confers and imposes on men as Christians, are not from nature, but from revelation and grace. *Natural rights* as Christians! Christianity is a positive institution; and of course all rights derived by it are from positive, and not from natural grants. Have Christians a *natural right* to baptism, the Lord's supper, to enforce the discipline of the Church, to ordain pastors and other things of the like nature? "The right to associate for important religious purposes, we insist, is the *natural inherent right* of Christians; a right of which no man, or body of men, is competent to deprive them; a right which they are to be presumed to possess, unless it has been prohibited to them by the great Head of the Church," pp. 400, 401. Christians, as Christians possessed of *natural inherent rights*! Does Dr. Pond mean to say, that Christians are Christians by nature? *Inherent rights* are those which flow from the original constitution of man, and are inwoven with the essential properties of his being, and cannot be abrogated without a dissolution of the entire fabric of man, and a resolution of the whole into its primitive elements. Can it be possible that Dr. Pond holds that the rights of Christians, as Christians, *naturally inhere* in them? If so, "Christianity," as the infidel Tyndall wrote a book to prove, "must be as old as the creation."

The second argument which he adduces, is "that as the Head of the Church has no where prohibited the exercise of this right, it is to be presumed that Christians possess it." Here again is an oversight of well known and long established principles. Throughout the civilized world it is a maxim of law, that in all positive institutions, no right or privilege is granted, except that which is expressly stated. If one claims any thing under a positive law, he is bound to show

in the express terms of the law, that his claim is therein authorised. In the present case, the burden of proof lies altogether on the defenders of voluntary institutions. They claim the right of promoting the interests of the Church of Christ, and of performing the duties peculiar to it, otherwise than in the forms and by the officers of the Church, according to the platform of the New Testament. It is enough for us to say, according to the incontrovertible axiom of law, reason, and Scripture, that every positive institution, all incorporated bodies, all chartered privileges, all municipal duties, are to be held, administered and obeyed according to that which is actually, specifically, and expressly set down in the several instruments, constitutions, charters and laws, enacting, ordaining, and instituting them. Dr. Pond's assertion therefore must be reversed—a right which they are to be presumed *not to possess*, unless it be expressly granted by the Head of the Church.

If Dr. Pond intelligently adopts, in all its force and compass, this canon of ecclesiastical law, "that any thing in divine things is granted, which is not expressly prohibited," he would have made an admirable conformist had he lived in the days of Charles II., and a middling papist in the times of Luther and Calvin. The grand point of debate and contest between the Papists and the Protestants, and between the High Church and State Party in the reign of Charles II., and our non-conformist forefathers, was the identical one before us. The Protestants contended for the *Bible*, as the *only* rule of faith and *practice*. In like manner, the non-conformists contended that nothing should be either imposed on Christians, or *required* of them, except what is expressly laid down in Scripture, or deducible therefrom, by a just and *necessary* consequence. On the other hand, traditions, decrees of councils, *expediency*, and other things of the like nature, were urged as good and sufficient reasons for orders of clergy, ceremonies, *voluntary societies* in great numbers, Black, White, and Gray. The argument of the celebrated Hooker in his Ecclesiastical Polity, turns on this pivot; that whatever is not forbidden in God's word, and is conformable to propriety and fitness, to expediency and *natural order*, in the form, government, worship, and discipline of the Church, is allowable and obligatory. On the contrary, the non-conformists maintained, that every religious act, in order that it may be a good work, must pro-

ceed from faith: and as faith has the word of God for its object, and that only, consequently, nothing is to be received, observed, or obeyed, as a Christian ordinance, work, or duty, except the positive requisitions of the Bible, expressly, or by necessary implication, found in the letter of the Scriptures. By means of this single individual principle, our forefathers vindicated the liberty of the Church from her oppressors. They became pilgrims to this then savage land and howling wilderness, that they might possess in power the *right* and enjoy the *liberty* of serving God *according to his word*, and not according to the "doctrines and commandments of men."

A theological professor in one of our sacred seminaries, ought surely to know so much of the History of the Church, as to avoid reviving that pestilent error by which the worst abominations of the papacy crept in. Voluntary chastity and poverty, although not commanded, yet are not forbidden in the Gospel. Deceived by the apparent sanctity of a life wholly secluded from this world, and flattered by the superiority over common Christians, which was attained by monastic vows and austerities, multitudes organized *voluntary societies* for the attainment of higher religious ends, than would be gained by conformity to the established institutions and precepts of Christ and his apostles. Hence came works of supererogation, and the subsequent distinction between the counsels and the precepts of Christ. Afterwards, as a natural result, the doctrine of merits, and then indulgences. Now it is evident, that Dr. Pond's ethical rule, "that what is not prohibited is admissible, and may be obligatory," involves its converse, viz., that some works are admissible, "as good and profitable unto man" which are not commanded, and supererogation is raised from the dead.

As Dr. Pond is taken captive by that insidious error, which was the root of the corruptions of the Romish church, and his understanding is bewildered by its "show of wisdom," in like manner he seems to be infected with its spirit. On pp. 413, 414, he celebrates the apotheosis of the voluntary societies which he defends. "*God has evidently marked these institutions for his own. He has set visibly upon them the seal of his blessing.*" The decree of canonization is pronounced. True Dr. Pond carefully informs us, that he claims not infallibility. "I know," says he, "we are not infallible in the judgment we form, with reference to the favours and

frowns of heaven. We are liable to be deceived. Still the book of Providence is not altogether an unintelligible record. Something certainly, may be gathered from it. And nothing is more evident to my own mind, than that the societies of which I speak, such as the Bible, Tract, Education, and Missionary Societies, have enjoyed, and are enjoying, in a pre-eminent degree, the favour and blessing of Almighty God." The process of this Protestant act of canonization, (as the solemnity was performed in Dr. Pond's mind,) is worthy of special attention. It consists of three acts. First, a humble disclaimer of infallibility in interpreting the judicial decisions of God from the course of his providence merely. Second, a modest and meek assertion of our ability to discern something—to spell out a little from the "not altogether unintelligible record of Providence." By a prodigious bound, the last act brings us to the full assurance of understanding. "Nothing is more evident!" Indeed—is it then so that nothing—not even the Bible itself—is more evident, than that "God has evidently marked these institutions for his own?" It is even so. With him they are *divine*, and clothed with the authority of God, authenticated and consecrated by the "visible seal of his blessing." Yea, more, necessity is laid upon him. "I *must* regard these great and good institutions as the work of God, not only the product of his power, but the *gift of his grace*." Actum est. Henceforth,—if Dr. Pond is the oracle of the faithful in the voluntary society fraternities, these institutions are not to be regarded as the voluntary works, and uncommanded devices of man's wisdom and benevolence, but the "products of God's power, and the gifts of his grace." The highest eulogium pronounced on the word, ministry, sacraments, worship and discipline of the Church of Christ is, that "they are the products of God's power, and the gifts of his grace," and this is the blessing wherewith Dr. Pond blesses the societies. With him, of course, they are of equal authority, and on the same foundation. No wonder then that he has the courage to assume the office of a public censor and judge, and with pontifical authority administer to the writer of our article, and the writer of this, and all others, who agree with us in the great principle in discussion, the following rebuke,—“It becomes those who fight against them, with a view to overthrow them, very seriously to inquire, whether, though they mean not so—they are not really *fighting against God*.” Dr. Pond makes thorough work. He absolves, anoints, crowns, enthrones, and blesses

these societies, and proclaims them Spiritual Powers of Divine Right. And concludes, according to the ancient ritual, by pronouncing an anathema on all who venture to deny or resist their dominion over the consciences and actions of men. "Beware of opposition to these "productions of God's power, and gifts of his grace," for it is "fighting against God!" Here is the Lordship over God's heritage, previously charged upon the voluntary societies, asserted and vindicated; a spiritual jurisdiction of the highest authority, and armed with the sanctions of God's own law and majesty.*

But Dr. Pond seems to forget all this when he adverts to the argument of our author on p. 114. That the voluntary principle "produces a spiritual power and jurisdiction out of the Church, which is yet to be exercised over the Church." For, he says on pp. 412, 413, "Were this assumption founded in truth, no doubt the societies in question would be fraught with 'danger and mischiefs' in abundance. All those which our author has mentioned, and a great many more, might reasonably be expected from them. But the assumption has no foundation in truth. It is not true in either of its parts. They are instruments, which the Church has adopted, if not *created*, by means of which to operate in blessing the world. They are, moreover, responsible to the Church, because they *subsist* upon the approbation and patronage of the Church, and should these at any time be withdrawn, their days would at once be numbered and finished. Nor is it true that the societies under consideration are endeavouring or wishing to exercise a *legislative control* over the Church. Never was an idea conceived or uttered, more purely imaginary, more thoroughly false and unfounded than this. Legislate for the Church!! &c."

Dr. Pond has an admirable invention, and an easy and happy manner of providing for all emergencies. Just as he can make churches of individuals, and individuals of churches, as occasion requires; so he can make the societies divine at one time, and human at another. When he

* We would by the by, inquire what becomes of the "voluntary principle" if the above views of Dr. P. are correct? If these societies are divine institutions, how are they the voluntary establishments of men? It seems to me, that Dr. Pond has exploded the voluntary system utterly. If I am under obligations to join these societies and sustain them, or else be liable to the imputation of "fighting against God," where is the voluntary principle, and how can these societies be said to owe their existence and continuance, not to divine command, but to the election and good pleasure of men?

would rebuke us for our presumption in calling in question the voluntary principle, and effectually repress all further intermeddling with the societies, then they become in his hands, "the products of God's power, and the gifts of his grace," and we are solemnly admonished to take care, lest in opposing them, we be found "fighting against God." And on the other hand, when he would repel and refute the charge, that these societies are spiritual powers out of the Church, incontrollable by it, and yet claiming jurisdiction over it, he turns about and affirms that they are "instruments which the Church has adopted, *if not created!*" Dr. Pond is almost, if not altogether persuaded, that the societies are the *creation of the Church*. He has here a little hesitency, but a few pages back, p. 399, he speaks in his usual confident tone, "they are to be regarded as the very offspring and property of the Church. The Church *brought them into existence*, and by the patronage of the Church, they are sustained at every step. This patronage may be withheld, too, at any time; and whenever it is withheld, the societies are down and dead at once." It seems, then, that in the Church they "live and move and have their being," and may, at the sovereign will and pleasure of the Church, be cast down and put to death at once. But on p. 414, he says, "I must regard these great and good institutions as the *work of God*—not only the product of his power, but the gift of his grace!" Dr. Pond has kindly administered to us a rebuke, and put us on inquiring, whether in our opposition to the voluntary principle, we are not fighting against God. I will venture in return, not to rebuke Dr. Pond, "but to entreat him as a father," to inquire whether he is not "making light of the works of God's power, and gifts of his grace" in casting them down at the feet of the Church, to live or die at the mere will of its members? That I do not mistake or pervert his meaning, is obvious to every attentive reader. On pp. 418, 419, he says further, "The voluntary principle is certainly one of great power whether for good or evil. The Church is fully competent to take care of it;—on the one hand to give it scope and efficiency, and on the other to curb and restrain it, *at will.*" The Chinese, it is said, worship their household gods, *the works of their own hands*, one day, and whip them the next. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Before dismissing this part of the subject, we will add,

that the supposition of its being at all times "competent for the Church, or any part of it" to arrest and remedy evils connected with the operation of the voluntary principle and growing out of it, is a mistake of Dr. Pond's. He himself affords throughout his article abundant proof of the hazards to be encountered by any one and every one who dares to call in question the voluntary societies. We will not gather together the numerous instances of direct and implied reproach cast on our author and his associates, for presuming to publish an *Inquiry* concerning voluntary societies. We commend Dr. Pond for his manly and honest course in openly and frankly calling us to account before the public and giving us an opportunity of vindicating ourselves. In this he deserves and receives our unfeigned thanks and respect. We think of him far otherwise than we do of those persons, some of whom are conspicuous leaders of voluntary societies, who immediately after the publication of the article above mentioned, withdrew their subscriptions from this work, and exerted themselves to induce others to do the same. This is but a specimen of the meek and lowly—the tractable and gentle spirit which the voluntary system generates, towards the Church and "every part of it." The voluntary system has the "horns of a lamb, but speaks like a dragon." Witness the reception given to the Resolutions of the General Association of Connecticut, and that of Massachusetts; and the treatment which those ministers of churches and the Presbyterian Church of the United States, who are opposed to voluntary societies, have received at the hands of their abettors. Indeed, I see not how it can be otherwise, if Dr. Pond speaks the sentiments of the great body of the conductors and supporters of the voluntary societies. If resistance to them is fighting against God, and we are enemies to the "great and good institutions, which are the products of God's power and the gifts of his grace," we ought to be regarded as "the enemies of all righteousness" or as blind and furious zealots, whose "mouths should be stopped."—"Our National Societies," says Dr. Pond on p. 409, "for Domestic and Foreign Missions, for Education, for Bibles, Tracts, and Sunday-Schools,—these great and good institutions, which like so many trees of life in the garden of the Lord, are yielding their fruit every month, and scattering their leaves for the healing of the nations, how could they have even come into existence, but as voluntary societies? How can they be con-

tinued in existence any other way? Explode the voluntary principle—run it down—write it down, as some men seem intent to do, and these great societies are dashed at once into a thousand fragments, fragments which never can be gathered up. *And these societies being abolished, it is impossible to substitute any thing in their place*”—and to the same effect on p. 420, “The questions at issue respect a principle on the correctness of which the highest interests of the Church and the world seem now, under God, to be suspended—the abandonment of which would roll back the streams of the water of life, which is now flowing out in a thousand channels, to gladden the Church, and to bless and save the world.” And on p. 415, “Truly, it seems to me, that those who are laying their hands on our great voluntary societies, and labouring to effect their overthrow, cannot be aware of the consequences of their efforts. The most charitable supposition is, *that they know not what they do*. My own belief is, that, could their plans succeed (which may God, in his infinite mercy prevent,) within five years, the amount of charitable efforts for the spread of the gospel, would be diminished one half; and that within the next five years, there would be a diminution of half the other half. And by that time, the few labourers that remained, would become thoroughly discouraged, and the Church would be prepared for another long sleep,—till, under the influence of the voluntary principle, operating at some future distant day, it should awake again, and shake itself from the dust, and prepare to engage in its appointed work.”

In Dr. Pond's estimation, the *voluntary principle* is the vital principle of fruitfulness in the Church, and of salvation for the world, and which of course admits of no possible substitute. How then can any dissenting from it be regarded in any other light, than as Christ regarded his executioners, as Stephen his murderers, or as Paul did Barjesus the sorcerer, who “would pervert the right ways of the Lord?”

But let this pass. We have in this connection a question for Dr. Pond, and then an observation for our readers, after which we will return to the examination of Dr. Pond's remaining arguments in defence of the right to form voluntary societies. The question for Dr. Pond is, how he will reconcile his assertion on p. 409, “These societies being abolished, it is impossible to substitute any thing in their place,” with his declaration on p. 421, —“let it be repeated

and remembered, that friends as we are to the voluntary societies, we do not contend for them *exclusively*. We do not insist that there can be no other lawful mode of doing good." How now could Dr. Pond expatiate as he does with so much elaborate and impassioned eloquence on the universal and hopeless ruin of all the charitable works of the Church, and the madness of those mischievous zealots against whose efforts he prays for the interposition of infinite mercy, when he was so fully aware of the lawfulness of other modes of doing the same works of faith and labours of love, that it must be "repeated, and we charged to remember, that he does not insist on the voluntary principle *exclusively*." We have not slighted Dr. Pond's charge, and we have taken particular notice of it, according to his direction; and we wish him also to remember it, and to take as special notice of it as we have done. Besides this, we wish him to take into special consideration "the colouring and extravagance" of the above mentioned high-wrought passages, which derive all their force and pertinency from the assumption, which he himself disowns and repudiates, that the voluntary societies are the *exclusive modes* of doing good, and that if they "be abolished, *it is impossible to substitute any thing in their place*." We will give place here for Dr. Pond to be his own reprover. "I am sorry to see here, as in other parts of the article, a degree of colouring and extravagance, which render the statements, in many instances, false and injurious. This is an evil to which those who write for the periodical press are always exposed, and against which they cannot be too strictly watchful. Better sacrifice a rhetorical flourish, and give our sentences the less point and poignancy, than offend against truth, and needlessly injure our Christian brethren." I complain of Dr. Pond as guilty of this very offence. He well knew that the author, on whom he inflicts, with unsparing severity, the lashes of a practised critic and veteran controvertist, and his associates have never breathed the slightest emotion of hostility to the *works* of Christian love for a guilty and perishing world which distinguish and bless our age, nor lifted a finger towards their overthrow; but on the contrary, have only pleaded, that as they are the branches of the vine, they should not be severed from their parent stock, nor put out of the vineyard where they were planted, nor put under other vine-dressers than those whom the Lord of the vineyard has appointed. In short, pleading

for the principle, *that ecclesiastical works should be done in an ecclesiastical way*, we are held up to suspicion, reproach, and odium, as hostile to the *works* themselves. Now I say, Dr. Pond knew better, and the proof he shall furnish himself. On p. 421, he says, "We hear it urged that, the voluntary societies are wrong in principle, and injurious in practice; and of course that they ought, with the least possible delay, to be removed, and *ecclesiastical organizations of some sort, to be substituted in its place.*" My charity does not prompt me to say, that Dr. Pond "knew not what he did" when he put us into the attitude of enemies to the benevolent gifts and labours of God's people for the salvation of sinners both at home and abroad. He did indeed, in a note on p. 409, disclaim the impeaching of our motive. "They are actuated, doubtless, by an honest, though, I must think, mistaken zeal." This is a worn-out and thread-bare cover of a designed attempt to prostrate and ruin an opponent. "Brutus is an honourable man—so are they all—all honourable men," says Mark Anthony, when kindling the indignation of the people against the assassins of Cæsar. Dr. Pond will please to take it back, so far as I am concerned. Judge me by my words and actions. If my sentiments and conduct are mischievous, "render unto me according to my deeds." I wish not to be held up to the public view as a wild boar in the garden of the Lord, making havoc of the trees of life, and then covered over with the sheep-skins of "honest motives." In these days, a spurious charity—a contemptible mock-magnanimity, a wholesale affectation of candour, circulates amongst us, by which heretical teachers and disorderly walkers are shielded from merited condemnation. Let men be sent to the hospital if they be insane. If not, let them be regarded and treated as intending to say and do, what they in fact say and do; and if they make mischief, let them be held responsible for their evil deeds.

The observation for our readers, which we mentioned above, and to which we call their particular attention, is this—that the vehement zeal of Dr. Pond for the voluntary societies in opposition to modes of Christian action in building up the kingdom of Christ in the world, which are strictly conformable to the positive institutions of our Lord and his Apostles, is a verification of the ancient and consistent proverb—Human inventions in divine things war with God's institutions. The great sin of Israel of old was, the

forsaking of God's ways, and going a whoring after their own inventions. The Scribes and Pharisees made void the law of God by their traditions. A *voluntary humility and will-worship* infested the apostolic age of the Church. The ritual of Pagan Rome was foisted into the Roman Church, under colour of expediency. The Protestant age of the world is replete with innumerable experiments of man's wisdom and self-impelled activity, aside from "the letter and spirit" of Divine Revelation, to accomplish professedly the great ends for which it was given. In all these cases, the innovators on God's ways and words, betrayed the fiercest zeal for their own works, according to the invariable law, "all seek their own;" and against none did their animosity kindle and burn so furiously as against those servants of God, who asserted and maintained the sacred and inviolable prerogative of God's revealed will, "as the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice." When the despised and insulted "witnesses" for God's word, alleged in their defence, that they dared not "teach for doctrines the commandment of men," they were met, just as Dr. Pond meets our author, with the *πρωτον ψευδος*—the fomes—the seminal principle of Babylonish whoredom—"that they have a right to do any thing which is *not prohibited* by the great Head of the Church." The conformists said to our non-conformist forefathers, whereabouts in the Bible, are we prohibited from using the ring in the ceremony of marriage—signing with the cross in baptism—bowing at the name of Jesus—wearing the surplice—putting the communion-table altar-wise? The papists said, where are men and women prohibited from taking monastic vows—visiting the sacred places—honouring the relics of martyrs, and other holy men—setting apart week-days for pious and godly uses? Where are we prohibited from using vestments "for glory and beauty;" appointing various orders of clergy, &c., &c. And to come nearer home, Jedediah Burchard echoes the argumentative query of Dr. Pond, "Where in all the Bible is the *anxious seat* prohibited?" Give me the voluntary principle, and Dr. Pond's canonical decree, "all is rightful which is not prohibited in name and form in the Bible," and in three months I can chalk out and set in motion "special efforts" as thick as the quails about the camp of Israel. This is the place to notice Dr. Pond's attempt to represent our author and his associates as empirics. On p. 420 he says the

question at issue is—"whether all these great institutions are to be given up, and the attempt be made to bring forward something else, at present, not explained, and perhaps not understood, and substitute it in their place. A greater question, if it must be a question, was never submitted to the Church to decide." In a note to the above, he says, "We hear not a little, at the present day, of the danger, of 'experiments' in the political world. Possibly the Church may learn from this a lesson of wisdom, and not forsake the path of treasured and happy *experience*, for any theories, however splendid; for any 'experiments' however flattering in promise and in hope."

Now we contend that Dr. Pond is the empiric—the voluntary principle the *catholicon nostrum*, and the *dogma that all is right which is not forbidden*, is the license to practice. Divesting the word of God of its supreme and sole authority to prescribe all the works, and oversee and controul all the affairs of his house, his children and his servants, and leaving it possessed of a negative merely—a naked veto, he puts the direct and efficient powers of the throne and monarchy of God, at the disposal of the self-created and self-regulated experiments of man's wisdom and will. No wonder, then, that the voluntary principle has filled the world with countless and multifarious projects. No wonder that this age teems with "experiments." The remedy is, a return to the lessons of experience and wisdom somewhat anterior to Dr. Pond's "path of treasured and happy experience," as far back as the date of the New Testament. Dr. Pond, we humbly conceive, and with him not a few gospel ministers, would do well to seek for their commission, not from the voluntary principle, not from Scripture as a register of vetoes, an index *expergatorius*, but from Mat. 28: 20, "*Teaching them all things whatsoever I HAVE COMMANDED YOU.*"

Having dwelt thus long on this head, longer than would have been necessary if Dr. Pond's article had been well digested and methodically arranged; for we have been obliged to pick and cull the related parts, and put them "bone to his bone;" we proceed to his third argument, on p. 401, 402, "That the voluntary method of doing good, is abundantly sanctioned and supported in the New Testament." His first proof is taken from the proceedings of Philip. "At the time of the persecution at the death of Ste-

phen, Philip went down to Samaria, and preached Christ unto them ; and a great revival of religion followed, as the result of his preaching. And when these things came to the ears of the church at Jerusalem, (for it seems they did not previously know where Philip was, or what he was doing,) they sent unto them Peter and John. Here, too, we have a specimen of the two methods of doing good. Philip acted on the voluntary principle, and Peter and John were sent by the Church. And was this labour of Philip regarded as unscriptural and wrong ? Was he rebuked by the church to which he belonged, for his unauthorized and intemperate zeal ? So far from this, the whole church seems to have rejoiced exceedingly in his success, and two of the apostles were deputed to go to his assistance." Dr. Pond is a man of rare gifts. The voluntary principle, or something else, perhaps the "exercise scheme," or I know not what, not being learned in these matters, enables him to make churches of individuals, and individuals of churches, human institutions divine, and divine institutions human ; and now, to crown all, to make *Scripture*. Let us turn to the authorized version, and the textus receptus in the first place, and then compare it with Dr. Pond's. Acts viii. 5-7 : "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them : and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed." 12th v. "When they believed Philip's preaching the things of the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." 14th v. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John : 15 v, who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost."

A comparison of Dr. Pond's version with the text, shows us that all he says of the agency of the church at Jerusalem in this case is purely fictitious. It was the apostles, not the Church, who sent Peter and John to Samaria ; and consequently his argument derived from this passage vanishes. His assertion that Philip acted on the "voluntary principle," is mere assertion, without a particle of evidence. On the

contrary, Philip was divinely inspired and directed in his office of an Evangelist.

In the 26th v. "The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south," &c.; and again, v. 29: "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot;" and v. 39: "The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip," &c. Will Dr. Pond call this "acting on the voluntary principle?" Now as Philip was sent away from Samaria by the angel of the Lord, and was directed by the Spirit of the Lord in respect to the eunuch, the presumption is strong that he was divinely commanded to go down to Samaria. This presumption is strengthened by the fact that, when Christ sent out the twelve, in the first instance, he expressly prohibited them from "entering into any city of the Samaritans;" Mat. 10: 5. Peter could be brought to preach the gospel to the Gentiles only by express divine direction superadded to his apostolic commission. As the Samaritans were, equally with the Gentiles, shut out from the privileges of the gospel by the directions of Christ in the first mission of the apostles, and as Peter was sent to Cornelius by the immediate command of the Lord, the inference is in the highest degree probable, that Philip was specially directed in his mission to Samaria. What becomes, now, of Dr. Pond's bold and unqualified declaration that Philip "acted on the voluntary principle?"

The residue of Dr. Pond's paragraph is sheer fiction, set forth in substance, though not in form, as Scripture testimony. If our author had written that paragraph, or any thing like it, our readers can easily imagine what castigation he would have received from Dr. Pond's pen; and we add, with justice.

The second proof adduced by Dr. Pond, is derived from the manner in which Paul and Barnabas executed their mission to the heathen.

"When Paul and Barnabas first went to the heathen, they were sent forth by the church at Antioch, under the direction of the Holy Ghost. But their next excursion, (and, so far as appears, each of their succeeding ones,) was conducted purely on the voluntary principle. 'Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go and visit our brethren, in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.' Acts 15: 36. But as they could not agree respecting

the individual to be associated with them, they separated, forming two companies, and went forth to their work, in different directions."

"In his subsequent operations, Paul seems to have been attended often by a considerable company, constituting, substantially, a missionary society. Shall we say, that Paul mistook the path of duty, and established a precedent dangerous to the Church? Or shall we say, (what is true,) that he acted under the direction of the Holy Ghost, and left a bright example to the supporters of missions, in all succeeding ages of the world?"

Dr. Pond's great conception, "that the Church is identical with its members," is in a fair way of becoming architectural, and of forming a new theory both of speculative reasoning and of interpretation. Here he asserts that Paul and Barnabas "were sent forth by the church at Antioch." Let us examine the record for ourselves, for we have had full proof, that it is not safe to trust Dr. Pond's accuracy in his use of the Bible. Acts 13: 1-4: "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain *prophets and teachers*, as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As *they* ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I have called them*. And when *they* had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, *they* sent them away. So *they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost*, departed unto Seleucia;" &c. Where did Dr. Pond find "the church" which he says "sent forth Paul and Barnabas?" Will he say that the church is identical with inspired prophets and teachers? If not, I ask again, where he finds the church in this case. Dr. Pond complains of our author as guilty of "an occasional *lumping* of the different societies and their agents together, and a condemnation of all alike, when the things charged upon them, can, with no colour of truth, be applied to more than a very small part." p. 417. If our author offended in manner and form, as Dr. Pond affirms, (which, as we shall presently see is not the case, and when it will appear that Dr. Pond is no more to be trusted with the writings of men, than it is evident he is with the word of God) and if the offence of which he complains be, as he says, something *a great deal worse* than a fancy sketch, and "which he is extremely sorry to see in the pages of a writer who

has shown himself so capable of instructing and blessing the world," it was not an offence against the sacred Scriptures. He did not lump up "the church at Antioch with the prophets and teachers," who were over them in the Lord. Justice to our author demands a vindication against the "complaint" of Dr. Pond just alluded to, and though not in order here, yet we may as well attend to it now, as we shall not find a more convenient opportunity. Dr. Pond founds his "complaint" of *lumping* together the different societies and their agents, and then charging upon all what with no propriety can be applied to more than a very small part," on two extracts; the first from p. 112, the second from p. 116. The first passage is as follows:—"They will defy and malign whatever and whomsoever is not subservient to their plans. Reckless of consequences, they will, like the lightning, shiver whatever comes in their way." This passage occurs under the second specification "of some of the dangers and mischiefs which necessarily attach to the PRINCIPLE, that any man or set of men, may of their own knowledge and will, set up such societies as seem to them expedient and practicable for the accomplishment of ends, for which the Church is instituted." p. 109. The first of which is—"It is a PRINCIPLE tending directly and inevitably to anarchy and insubordination." p. 109. The second—"As intimately allied to the evil already described, we mention the great multiplication of strifes and discords, as the natural fruit of the voluntary principle." The first section under this head is introduced by the observation that, "If any man have the liberty of instituting and pushing forward such organizations as he sees fit, then, as we have already hinted, *opposing and hostile institutions* will spring up in numbers proportioned to the discordant views and fancies of men." In illustration of this observation, our author proceeds, and after describing the well-known properties of human nature, as likely to be called into action on this supposition, he adds: "Taking men as they are, too, what less can be expected, than that, when fame and fortune are staked on the success of a project, its abettors should deem all other interests of small moment when compared with the success of their cause, or at least, as involved in, and identified with it? *They will defy and malign whatever and whomsoever is not subservient with their plans. Reckless of consequences, they will, like the lightning, shiver whatever comes in their way.*"

Taken in its place and its connection, the passage quoted by Dr. Pond, belongs to our author's elucidation of the voluntary *principle*, on the supposition of its being reduced to *universal practice*. Dr. Pond has made use of the passage, as if our author had applied it to *existing societies*, and to the manner in which the agents of these societies had *actually* conducted. The *lumping* of hypothesis with fact, is done by Dr. Pond, and then charged upon our author.

The second quotation of Dr. Pond, is from p. 116. There our author speaks of our various *reforming societies*. As these depend mainly on the Church for success, our author says, that it is "a primary point with them to drill the Church into their measures." If they be opposed in these attempts, he goes on to say, as in the extract of Dr. Pond, "If agents cannot force their way into pulpits, then the press scatters its firebrands among all the combustible matter in the congregation; all possible expedients are resorted to to hold up the minister to the derision and contempt of his people; and if possible, to dissolve his connection with them. Is this a fancy sketch, or a sober reality?" Where, now, is the "lumping of the different societies and their agents together," which Dr. Pond complains of?

Dr. Pond says, "I venture to say that, with reference to nineteen out of twenty, if not ninety-nine out of every hundred, of all the agents that have been employed by voluntary societies, during the last thirty years, and who are here *indiscriminately lumped together*, the representation is 'a fancy sketch,' or something a *great deal worse*." p. 417. Our author spoke of the agents of "our various reforming societies," and Dr. Pond has indiscriminately "lumped them together" with "*all the agents of all the voluntary societies for thirty years past*." Dr. Pond is the draughtsman of that fancy sketch which he says *truly* is "something a great deal worse" than fancy, and then palmed it on our author. This does not seem to me to be right. But I am behind the age, and have much to learn. According to the ideas of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, of honourable ingenuousness and disgraceful trickery, in which I was trained, if I should pursue towards Dr. Pond the course he has taken with our author above, I should feel that I was—"acting on the voluntary principle," any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

But let us return to Paul and Barnabas. Following, as

we do, the "voluntary principle," the chase is like the game, here and there, and any where, and no where long at a time. "When Paul and Barnabas first went to the heathen," says Dr. Pond, "they were sent forth by the church at Antioch, under the direction of the Holy Ghost." We have seen that the Church had nothing to do with the matter, but it was wholly commanded, and that specially by the Spirit of God. They were appointed missionaries to the heathen by the Holy Ghost, and not either self-elected, or chosen by the prophets or teachers, nor by the Church. "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto *I have called them*," said the Holy Ghost. They were not then mediately sent, but immediately and supernaturally. The "separation" mentioned in the text, was the formal, visible solemnity whereby their divine call and commission was published, and authenticated in view of the Church and the world.

"But their next excursion," says Dr. Pond, ("and so far as appears, each of their succeeding ones,) was conducted purely on the voluntary principle." "Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren, in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." Acts, 15: 36. Here we inquire for Dr. Pond's authority for limiting the divine call of Paul and Barnabas to go as missionaries to the heathen, and their solemn consecration to that office, to their first tour? Were they discharged from their office on their return, so that after that it was altogether optional with them whether to go again or not? Paul was the "Apostle of the Gentiles," "necessity was laid upon him." "If I do this thing willingly," said he, "I have a reward, but if against my will a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me, yea wo is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." But according to Dr. Pond, he was, after his first missionary excursion, exonerated from his divine vocation, and left to his option—to the "voluntary principle."

Moreover, if Paul prosecuted his subsequent travels and labours in propagating the gospel among the Gentiles, on the "voluntary principle," it will follow that his epistles also were written in conformity to the same. But, according to the apostle Peter, the "epistles of Paul" and "the other Scriptures" are of like authority. 2 Peter, 3: 15, 16. But "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and consequently not by the "voluntary principle."

Dr. Pond finds a "missionary society" of a novel description in the associates of Paul, who attended him in his travels. "In his subsequent operations, Paul seems to have been attended often by a considerable company, constituting substantially a missionary society." If so, it was utterly unlike those for which he pleads, and how it subserves his purpose, we cannot discern.

The "voluntary principle" is apparent in one instance in the conduct of Paul and Barnabas, which Dr. Pond did not observe, or if he did, he thought it not deserving of attention. This is not surprising. The "sharp contention" between them, and consequent "separation," is an apt illustration of the "voluntary principle." So long as they obeyed the law of the Lord, and jointly executed the work to which they were jointly appointed by the Holy Ghost, they had no use for the "voluntary principle." But as soon as Barnabas gave way to his partiality for Mark, "his sister's son," and broke over the limits of his divine commission, to gratify the dictates of his natural inclination, then he found occasion and use for "the voluntary principle," and set up the first voluntary society in the apostolic ministry.

Here endeth the proof which Dr. Pond produces of his third argument in defence of voluntary societies for religious purposes, viz., "That the voluntary method of doing good is abundantly (!) *sanctioned* and *supported* in the New Testament. He appears to be perfectly satisfied with it, for he says, "It is evident from these examples, not to multiply others of equal authority, that the Scriptures do not forbid or discountenance individual or associated efforts to do good, undertaken on the purely voluntary principle. "Not to multiply others of *equal authority*!" I apprehend that Dr. Pond will find enough to do in making it out that the examples which he has above cited are of any "authority" at all, before he will venture on any others. And here I challenge him, or any other advocate of the "voluntary principle," to produce a solitary example or testimony of the Scriptures of self-invented religious works, which as to matter and form have been approved of God. Let it be remembered, that the question in debate is, not whether the "doing of good," as Dr. Pond loosely phrases it, is scriptural, but whether the doing of good in the forms which the voluntary principle takes, and which are distinct and diverse from the forms which God's word prescribes, and which have an ex-

cellency—a fitness, “a power,”—peculiar and inseparable from themselves, is directly or indirectly sanctioned in the Bible. The *voluntary form*, not the work done by the form, is the idol—the image—the *mode* of serving the Lord and blessing the world, which Dr. Pond contends is essential; “on which the Church has been operating, more or less, ever since her first organization—on which have been based her greatest and noblest movements for the last forty years—and *on the correctness of which the highest interests of the Church and world seem now, under God, to be suspended.*” p. 420. He insists on it with the highest assurance, that if the voluntary principle is exploded, that in about ten years the Church will fall into “another long sleep,” and nothing else except the “voluntary principle” can again awaken her to sense and motion. It is most evident, now, that the voluntary form, in Dr. Pond’s estimation, is the *body* of the spirit of life and love in Christians, considered as the “light of the world, and the salt of the earth;” and that if the body be dissolved, that spirit will depart. I ask Dr. Pond, and all others of like sentiments with him, if the Christians who now compose the religious societies, will not remain on the earth, safe and sound, if these institutions in their present form were dissolved? Would their faith, obedience, love to Christ, compassion for perishing sinners at home and abroad, and zeal for the glory of God, evaporate like ether, if these vessels were broken to pieces? How is it with Dr. Pond himself? Is he so identified with them, that he will fall into “a long sleep,” if the “dedicated things” are put into the “vessels of the sanctuary,” and given in charge to “Aaron and the priests?” Dr. Pond ought not to speak so meanly of his own piety, nor disparage the graces of the children of God, by holding forth the scandalous notion, that if pious men cannot do good works in any other capacity than as members of Christ’s Church, and in obedience to his institutions, they will not do any at all.

If I do not misapprehend Dr. Pond’s meaning, he does not bring up an “evil report” on Christians merely, but it reaches where he would not choose to find and to meet it. In the passage last quoted from p. 420, where he says that the Church has been operating more or less on the voluntary principle “ever since her *first organization*,” he pretty plainly intimates his belief, that the *first organization of the Church* was not on the voluntary principle. In consistency

with which, he makes the distinction between the manner of Paul's *first mission*, which was divinely commanded, and his subsequent operations, which were on the "voluntary principle." If this be his meaning, then, according to Dr. Pond, the voluntary principle is a human addition to the divine constitution. Now Dr. Pond maintains that the Church, without the "voluntary principle," sleeps a "long sleep," and the inference therefrom is inevitable, that the primitive church as divinely constituted—"in her first organization"—was a worthless sluggard; "a slothful and unprofitable servant," and so would have continued until the "voluntary principle had breathed into her nostrils the breath of life." Thus the works of the Lord are disparaged and made of no account, that the works of man may be glorified! Nevertheless, Dr. Pond assures us, that "the Scriptures do not forbid or discountenance individual efforts to do good, (!) undertaken on the purely voluntary principle. So far from this, they directly sanction and encourage such efforts." In passing, we notice again the inconsistency of Dr. Pond, of representing those actions as purely voluntary, which are at the same time set forth as authorized and enjoined by the Scriptures. On p. 402, he represents Paul's "subsequent operations" as performed in "the path of duty," and that he acted under the direction of the Holy Ghost, and left a bright example to the supporters of missions, in all succeeding ages of the world." If, now, the Scriptures sanction the voluntary mode, if Paul, in following that mode, pursued the "path of duty," if the Holy Ghost directed him in that course, and his is a bright example for all the friends of missions, how can it be voluntary in contradistinction to a divinely commanded mode of proceeding?

I anticipate Dr. Pond's reply to all this. He will say, that he contends for no such voluntary principle as this is, and refers us to p. 401, where he defines the voluntary method, to be in contradistinction, not to the divine word, but to "the express direction of the Church, and in connection with it, in its organized capacity." He moreover makes this formal statement in connection with words and phrases fitted for the purpose of enabling to turn upon us, and say, "What! you deny to Christians the right of doing good (!) of 'their own accord?'" I must not, it seems, give even a loaf of bread, visit a sick person, give away a Bible, or send a poor child to school, without a vote of the church!" Dr.

Pond shows the tactician, and drilled controvertist, in his sedulous use of the phrase "doing good." It enables him to render the dissenters from the voluntary principle, as it is exerted in the great national institutions, supremely ridiculous. When, therefore, he is preparing the way for an argument in the defence of the voluntary principle, or for a reply to an objection, the modest and harmless phrase of "doing good" is employed; but when that end is answered, then it is dropped for the potent and universal great and good institutions, "on which, under God, the interests of the Church and the world are suspended." He does not, consequently, meet the question fairly. We have further evidence of the truth of this charge, in his selecting the religious from all other voluntary societies, and defending these exclusively, whereas our author treated on the voluntary principle as it is developed in other and far different institutions, and as it may also be applied in countless forms, and for the most mischievous of ends. If Dr. Pond is able to show that the religious societies which he specifies, are conformable to God's word, of apostolic origin, necessary to the efficiency and even vitality of the Church, and no more liable to perversion than the Church itself is, when modelled and governed in accordance with the primitive platform, neither our author, nor the present writer, has any controversy with him. But let Dr. Pond bear in mind, that, as we have plainly evinced, that a defence of the religious societies on the grounds above mentioned, necessarily takes them out of the predicament of the voluntary principle, and that in advocating the voluntary principle for the purpose of protecting those societies, he has done a superfluous work, and has his labour for his pains.

The next proof which Dr. Pond produces, is in the following words; pp. 402, 403: "The missions of the first hundred years after the death of Christ, were chiefly conducted on the voluntary principle." For this assertion, which he makes in the form of a *historical fact*, and which he wishes should have the force of one, he gives no other evidence than an inference of his own, from another historical fact, the nature and application of which he misapprehends altogether. "Indeed," he continues, "it may be said that they were entirely so, except when some individual church became engaged in the work. For then there were no ecclesiastical boards. There were no confederate churches for the creation of such boards. The churches

continued insulated and independent, not meeting together in councils or synods, till about the middle of the second century. That there were numerous missionary companies or associations, like that of which Paul was the soul and centre, is altogether probable. But they were small; they were self-created; they were entirely voluntary. They were not separate from the churches, or independent of them. They existed in the churches, were composed of church members, and, through them, the churches engaged in, and, to a good degree, accomplished the important work to which their Lord had called them."

Dr. Pond can make historical facts with the same expedition, and as occasion requires, as he can make churches of individuals, and individuals of churches, human institutions—"self-created"—divine, and divine institutions human, Scripture also, and now history! Out of the testimony of Mosheim, that, "during the greater part of the second century, the Christian churches were independent of each other, nor were they joined together by association, confederacy, or any other bonds but those of charity:" from this historical statement, Dr. Pond infers that the "missions of the first hundred years, were chiefly conducted on the voluntary principle." The premise and the conclusion are so far apart, that one must leap like Sam Patch, of jumping notoriety, in order to pass from one to another at a single bound. We should be justified by our intelligent readers in passing this whole paragraph as unworthy of attention, if our only or principal design in replying to Dr. Pond was, simply to expose his egregious blunders. But we wish to do more—more than this. We wish to call, if possible, the attention of our fathers and brethren in the Church to this most important subject, and secure for it a thorough investigation. We therefore, in reply to this portion of Dr. Pond's article, observe:

First—That it is on all hands admitted, that the history of the Church, from the termination of the Acts of the Apostles, to the middle of the second century, is more defective than that of any subsequent period. The time and manner of the introduction of the gospel, and the planting of churches, and the persons by whom it was done, which were in being at the latter part of the second century and beginning of the third, as those in Britain, Gaul, and Germany, is still a matter of uncertainty and dispute. To put any doc-

trine or duty on foundation so untenable as the obscure and fragmentary traditions and writings of this least known portion of ecclesiastical history, is carefully avoided by all those who "make the Bible their only and sufficient rule of faith and practice," and resorted to by none except those, who must find a warrant for their sentiments elsewhere than in the word of God.

Secondly—Dr. Pond thrusts out of view, the agency of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, captivity, the resort of strangers from the most remote portions of the then known world to Rome, Alexandria, Ephesus, and other principal cities where churches were planted by the Apostles or their assistants, and who on their return carried with them the spirit and records of the gospel, persecution, the application of distant princes to the principal Churches, and their pastors for missionaries &c., in diffusing the light of Christianity throughout the world. It was *chiefly* in this manner, and not "chiefly by the voluntary principle" as Dr. Pond says, that the gospel spread during the period in question. He assumes the alternative, that there could have been no other mode of diffusing the gospel, than either "by the voluntary principle" or through "ecclesiastical boards."

Thirdly—Granting to Dr. Pond all that he claims, it makes nothing for the "great institutions" for which he contends. If "the bright examples" of the church during the apostolic age and the next immediately ensuing, are of binding authority, and can determine any thing as to this matter, they are not followed in any manner by the existing societies of New England.

Fourthly—Dr. Pond seems to understand the declaration of Mosheim, "that the churches were not joined together by any other bonds than those of charity" as if in effect it amounted to no union at all. On this point we shall dwell for a moment, for as we regard it, it is of importance in this whole subject. The apostle Paul denominates charity, the "bond of perfectness." By this the college of the apostles were bound together, and made a unit. No formal ties, other than this, were enjoined them by their Lord and Master. Mutual love was the badge of their discipleship, even to "all men." The churches likewise were joined together by the same bond, and all the original and apostolic institutions, ordinances and customs were of such a nature, that if charity was wanting, the fabric of the Church would fall to

pieces. The ideal of the Church, drawn by the Scriptures, is that of communities entire and separate in respect of place, independent of each other in respect to subordination of one to another, or of all to some common visible head, either one single or many, and yet composing a whole—a unit—"the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." "The locusts *have no king*, yet go they forth all of them *by bands*." Prov. 30: 27. "Men shall worship him (the Lord,) *every one from his place*." Zeph. 2: 11. By an invisible framework, by joints and bands which are incorporeal and intangible, all are members of a common divine head, and thus co-ordinate and co-equal. Each Church is a unit, complete in respect to parts, and entire as to all the attributes of a Church; adequate also to the ends for which the Church was instituted, so far as those ends depend on the agency of its members either singly or jointly. The universal Church is also a unit; but it is invisible. Its centre of unity is Christ, and its bonds are the Spirit of Christ, who is the life of that "one faith," and that "charity which is the bond of perfectness," whereby the members of Christ, being "many, are one body." Whilst then particular churches are separate one from another as to place—"each worshipping the Lord from its place"—independent as to form, order, government, and all its "works of faith and labours of love," yet, like the locusts which have "no king, go they forth by bands;" and are many as to outward appearance, but are, in fact, "joined together by no other bonds than those of charity." The attempt to embody this "charity," this "centre of unity," to locate it in fixed and visible forms, is an attempt "to ascend into heaven and bring Christ down from above." The Roman Church says, it is done already, and that he dwells in the Vatican. James Arminius aimed to do it, by a formula of faith in which all could agree. At the present time, the "voluntary principle" is set forth as the personification of the life, love, unity and fruitfulness of the kingdom of heaven,—as Christ on earth enthroned, and reigning in the voluntary societies. All these attempts assume the defectiveness and inefficiency of the Church "at its first organization," like the locusts "little upon the earth." Without a judge of controversies, said the papists, the Church will be rent into innumerable and interminable factions, and if there be any article of faith about which there is any controversy, said James Arminius, the divisions of the Church will con-

tinue and multiply, and "the disastrous consequences which must necessarily follow the suppression and overthrow of the great religious charitable societies, cannot be contemplated without *absolute consternation*." p. 414. He goes on to say, "What can be substituted among the Congregational churches, which have no extended ecclesiastic organization, which do not partake altogether of the voluntary character, and, from the nature of their constitution, can have none? What can be substituted in place of those great and excellent societies, in which Christians of different denominations are now harmoniously and extensively labouring together? In comparison with these, how *feeble* must be the instrumentality of *little*, separate, *sectarian* bounds, &c.?" Dr. Pond is a Congregationalist, and a Professor of Didactic Theology in a Congregationalist Theological Seminary. Common decency demands of me, the belief that he holds the Congregational system to be conformable to the word of God—the faith and order of the gospel. How now can he represent the Congregational Church of Maine to which he belongs, or of Connecticut, of which I am a member, as feeble, little, and *sectarian*, as by implication he evidently does, in the passages quoted above? Does Dr. Pond regard the distinctive articles of faith and rules of practice of the church in which he is a minister and a teacher of her candidates for the ministry, as "abstruse points of doctrine and discipline, which may be decided on either way without much affecting the interest of the church?" On pp. 409, 410, He says, "the constitution of some churches is such as to forbid the operating *extensively* and *unitedly* in any other way than that of voluntary association. This is true of all those churches, which retain the primitive principles of Congregational independency; all associations formed by the ministers and brethren of those churches, with a view to promote fellowship, or for any other purpose, must partake entirely of the voluntary character. This is true of all their church conferences consistories, and ministerial associations. This is true of all their united, confederate efforts to disseminate divine truth, and advance the cause and kingdom of Christ. As organized bodies, these churches may operate *separately* and *singly*; but they cannot confederate for extended operations, or any other principle than that of voluntary association. To attempt to do it in any other way, would be to drop at once their independency, and trans-

form themselves into some other denomination." But does it follow from this, that the independent churches must necessarily be inefficient in their benevolent operations? Those who ask, go to the Christian churches of the first century for an answer. Those were all independent churches. Waddington, an Episcopalian of the Church of England, speaking of the Church of the first century, says, "every church was *essentially independent* of every other. The churches thus constituted and regulated, formed a sort of federative body of *independent religious communities*, dispersed through the greater part of the Roman Empire, in continual communication and in constant harmony with each other." Ecc. Hist. p. 43. According to the above passages, it seems that it is Dr. Pond's conception of the Congregational church that it is impossible for its single and separate organized communities—its particular churches—to have any fellowship one with another, or to maintain a stated and common intercourse, or to pursue jointly a common and general end, except through the medium of voluntary societies, and yet, according to Waddington, the "independent religious communities, dispersed throughout the greater part of the Roman Empire, formed a sort of *federative body, in continual communication and in constant harmony with each other*. Was this confederation in the forms and through the medium of voluntary societies? Was it not by that "charity which is the bond of perfectness," and that "one faith—one Lord—one baptism," by which they "entered into the unity of the Spirit," and into "holy fellowship one with another?" Again, as to the efficiency of independent churches in benevolent operations, Dr. Pond refers to the churches of the first century, as furnishing ample proof to any one who doubts or denies it; and we are willing to leave for the present the point just where he has put it. But how he can reconcile all this with his implied assertion, that the Congregational church without "the great and excellent societies, in which Christians of different denominations are now harmoniously and extensively labouring together, must be, *feeble, little, sectarian*," remains for him to show.

On p. 415, Dr. Pond says, "If, without impairing the efficacy and usefulness of these societies, they can be brought into a nearer connexion with the churches, and more directly under their control, I have no objection; though I see not, at present, how this is to be done. Any plan to this effect,

however, which shall be candidly proposed, will be entitled to a candid consideration." I do not wonder that Dr. Pond is unable to discern the mode of adjusting the existing societies, to the principles and government of Congregational churches. They are irreconcilable. No plan can be devised to render their co-existence compatible with the safety of either. According to the views which I entertain of the tendencies of the present state of the case in the Congregational Church of New England, the attempt to continue even the religious voluntary societies side by side with the churches will result in the ruin of both.

I speak of Congregational churches only, for I am a Congregationalist and am "fully persuaded in my own mind," that Congregationalism is the form and order of church government ordained by the apostles. As to other denominations, I have no call to inquire how they may be able to promote the kingdom of Christ, as they severally understand that kingdom. When they ask my advice, it will be time for me to consider whether I have any to give. I cannot but think that it would be every way better for the Congregational ministers of New England "to abide in their calling," and not assume to themselves the office of speculating about the affairs of other denominations among themselves, or of burdening themselves with the concerns of the churches out of their limits, either at home or in Europe. If I cannot devise ways and means for the Protestants of Europe to proceed in their endeavours to extend the camp of the gospel without voluntary societies, it does not follow that we are obliged to sustain them here. To deduce practical principles for our own government from the multifarious and involved positions and connexions of evangelical Christians on the continent, and of dissenters in Great Britain, is but making a sorry exchange of our freedom for their galling bondage. After the notion that it is every one's duty to "convert the world," was broached, and the kindred dogma, that duty and ability are commensurate, was tacked to it, great and wise and good men increased and multiplied amongst us, beyond all precedent. Parish ministers discovered that "the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers" was not the particular church and society which had chosen them to be their ministers, but that their "field was the world." Private, Christians, male and female, young and old, began to "feel their great responsibilities," and that

the "conversion of the world" was required at their hands. The trustees of our colleges and theological seminaries, looked beyond the narrow walls of their several locations, and became "careful and troubled about many" states and nations. Just at this juncture, when thousands of hearts and minds were teeming with great and wise and good conceptions of their high and mighty vocation to "convert the world," the "voluntary principle" came opportunely for their deliverance. From that time to the present, the Congregational ministry and churches of New England (to go no further) have been in perpetual agitation and changes. Our ministers and the members of our churches, to a great extent, misled by the notion that they are bound to look after all the world, and consult for the universal interests of all denominations at home and abroad, and for all the heathen world, and for all coming time to the last day, have very naturally been led to regard the immediate affairs of their own churches, as of comparatively small importance. Hence the innovations on the doctrinal articles of faith, the terms of communion, the settlement and removal of pastors, ordination of ministers without charge, the multiplication of offices, meetings, exercises, &c. &c., which have in fact, if not in form, changed the Congregational Church into another denomination, adapted to the new views and relations introduced within the last twenty-five or thirty years.

I shall not attempt therefore to provide a substitute for these societies other than the churches themselves, and these as they were thirty years ago. I have no doubt at all, that the Congregational churches of Connecticut in their present ecclesiastical organization, are competent to all the duties which they owe to our country and the world. I am ready to avow, and on all proper occasions to maintain, that it is the duty of our churches and ministers to take into their own hands every one of the benevolent enterprises of a strictly religious character, of which they are now but fractional parts, and to which they are tributaries.

Having refuted the arguments adduced by Dr. Pond in support of his positions, that the voluntary religious societies are in fact, though not in form, institutions of the Church and under its supervision and control;—that the voluntary principle, in the manner and form of its application and use in these Societies, is of natural right and Scripture warrant; and that it is expedient and necessary; the main proposition

of the article which he assailed, and its principal arguments, remain unshaken. Until Dr. Pond, or some other person, shall bring forward evidence of the contrary, we shall continue to regard voluntary societies for the attainment of those ends for which the Church was instituted, as incapable of vindication, and inconsistent with the purity and prosperity of Christ's kingdom in the world.

ART. II.—INFLUENCE OF PELAGIANISM ON THE THEOLOGICAL COURSE OF REV. C. G. FINNEY, DEVELOPED IN HIS SERMONS AND LECTURES.

By REV. JOSEPH I. FOOT.

It is a matter of wonder with many sincere Christians, that fears exist respecting the ultimate results of apparently slight deviations from the formularies of sound doctrine. They cannot see why such departures from the truth should awaken sad apprehensions, or excite the least alarm in the churches. It is supposed, that if an individual appears to be bent on doing good, and on promoting the cause of godliness, and especially if under his preaching there are appearances of revivals of religion, he is to be left undisturbed in his course, whatever seeds of religious error he may scatter as he goes. It is declared to be exceedingly sinful to say, or even to hint, that his success is of a doubtful character, and that the progress of error will sweep away much that is precious and useful.

This has had a remarkable illustration in our own times. During more than twenty years after the beginning of this century, the churches had rest, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. Near the close of this period, an individual rose into public notice, who professed to have some new views of faith, especially in respect to prayer. His skill in the work of converting sinners, was extolled. On every side he was regarded as the mighty power of God.

Crowds rushed to his assemblies, and hundreds in them professed to be born of God. His fame penetrated large sections of the country. But the effects of his labours did not appear to be permanent; and his sun hastened to go down in clouds and thick darkness. He exposed himself to ecclesiastical discipline, and was deposed from the ministry. During his decline a successor was rising, who inculcated substantially the same views of faith. Young, ardent and persevering, he went forth like a giant to his work. Wherever he went, the kingdom of Satan was thought to tremble, the bulwarks of iniquity to be prostrated, the atheist to acknowledge God, the deist to believe the Scriptures, the impenitent in unwonted numbers to repent, and the hypocrite to become sincere in the service of Christ. Though his doctrines were not in all respects in agreement with the standards of the Church; though his departures from these were such as to call forth the most serious expressions of alarm; yet success was set up as the criterion by which the truth of his doctrines and the approbation of Christ were to be decided. During ten years, hundreds, and perhaps thousands, were annually reported to be converted on all hands; but now it is admitted, that his real converts are comparatively few. It is declared, even by himself, that "the great body of them are a disgrace to religion;" as a consequence of these defections, practical evils, great, terrible, and innumerable, are in various quarters rushing in on the Church.

But it is not merely the foresight of such practical evils, that awakens alarm in discerning Christians. They understand, that one error almost necessarily produces another. It is, indeed, possible for an individual to hold a prominent error, and not to follow on to others, which are its direct and legitimate consequences. But such cases rarely occur. Scarcely can an instance be found, in which a departure from one article of the Faith is not succeeded by an abandonment of many, and sometimes of them all. If a stone be taken from any part of an edifice, the building is weakened; but if one be removed on which its weight, or the union of its various parts mainly depends, it will totter and eventually fall. So of a confession of faith. If one article be abandoned, the system itself is injured; and if the rejected doctrine be a prominent one, it will probably lead to the re-

jection of all the correlative ones. All these doctrines are essential to the harmony and stability of the system, and when one has been abandoned, the rest are easily rejected.

To prevent the effect of this foresight, and to induce the Christian community to receive those, whose digressions from the received doctrines begin to be apparent, it is often urged, that *union* amongst men is exceedingly desirable, and therefore no ordinary considerations should be suffered to operate against it. This is unquestionably true respecting many of the minor forms and modes of Christian life; but it is vastly misapplied, when used to abate our regard for any article of the Faith once delivered to the saints. Which of these articles is not the declaration of a truth in opposition to a great, and, in general, a ruinous error? Which of them does not enter into the number of those for which the best Christian polemics have felt it a duty to contend, and which each errourist in his place has undertaken to destroy? Are we, then, to be gravely told, that a regard for union requires us to reject, or at least not to maintain, some of these articles? If so, then we demand, which of them shall we abandon? If, in consideration of union, we abandon one, why not another? The motive is equally operative in every part of the creed. The doctrine of the existence of God is the grand point of disunion with the atheist. It is important that all men be united. The blessings of union in views, are many and great. The atheist will not relinquish his cardinal doctrine, that "there is no God." Why, then, will Christians be so contentious as to maintain it? The deist believes there is a God, but denies that the Scriptures are a revelation of his will. Why, then, do Christians believe and teach, that the Bible is the word of God, when, by abandoning this article of their creed, there might be uninterrupted harmony? The Unitarian denies the true and proper divinity of Christ, and the personality of the Holy Ghost. Why, then, do the orthodox continue to hold and inculcate these doctrines, when little else is demanded as a condition of union, than to expunge them? The Pelagian denies that "the nature of man is depraved," and he requires of others only, that they relinquish this doctrine with its corresponding ones. Why, then, are the disciples of Augustine, so contentious as to inculcate that, by nature we are

children of wrath? The Arminian denies any immediate action of the Holy Spirit on the heart in regeneration and sanctification, and limits it chiefly to the understanding. Why, then, do Calvinists perpetuate the controversy, by teaching that the heart is renewed by the immediate act of the Holy Ghost, and by praying, "create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me?" The Sadducee believes death to be an eternal sleep. Why, then, do others, regardless of peace, teach that the trumpet shall sound, and the dead be raised? The Universalist sets forth as the distinctive article of his creed, that all "the wicked shall be turned" into heaven, and declares that he will live in unbroken love with others, if they will reject the declaration, that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. The same is true of every other doctrine. In the confession each is set forth in opposition to an error which is fatal to the form of sound doctrine. No one of them can be yielded, without danger to the whole cause of truth and to immortal souls. The same regard for union, which invites us to abandon the doctrine of decrees, election, or regeneration by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit, will also claim the renunciation of the Trinity, the inspiration of the Scriptures, or even the existence of God. Every truth will in this manner be swept away, and every error be allowed to reign predominant in the world.

There is one other circumstance, which, in our view, has contributed largely to the toleration of digressions from the form of sound doctrine. Theological error was formerly deemed to be a civil crime, and in various nations was punished in the same manner as the most flagrant offences. This mode of refuting it is extensively renounced as inexpedient and unjustifiable. And because the state does not now treat it as a civil offence, a persuasion seems to have come into existence, that there is no criminality in deviating from the counsel of the Lord; and that an intellectual rejection of doctrines which he has inculcated, is not as certainly sinful, as the practical violation of the laws which he has made. Hence theological error has waxed bold, and claims not only a *toleration by the state*, but also, with the exception of certain gross forms, a *hearing by the Church*. It is willing, indeed, that we should regulate "public opinion" respecting sinful acts, but protests against any condemnation of the principles, which must terminate in gross departures from

religious truth and practical obedience. It requires, indeed, a reception of a few general articles of faith, but strenuously asserts, that beyond these no one is morally accountable for what he believes or rejects. Thus from the idea that religious error is innocent, as well as from blindness to its legitimate effects, it has happened that aged divines and intelligent Christians were not duly heard, when they foretold the calamities which this toleration would bring on the Church. Those ministers and private Christians whose views were not clear respecting the nature of religious error, or the dependance of one truth on another, did not appreciate their motives, and were far more ready to call these men uncharitable, than to second their cautions, and thus to reclaim from further errors, those who were beginning to rush into them.* Thus the voice of admonition was hushed, and the way prepared for the successful introduction of error.

The author of the volumes before us, with several other men of the same school, seem to have adopted the principle, that whatever operates against their own views of human ability, is to be immediately rejected. Hence they have abandoned the great Christian doctrine of *the depravity of human nature*. They have held, that the "voluntary preference," "governing purpose," and consequent actions are sinful. When they were pressed with the fact, that the Bible, the catechism, and the ancient standards of faith in all orthodox churches, declare the *nature of man to be depraved*, they relieved themselves by affirming this to be the doctrine of "*Physical Depravity*." This is a name, whose meaning they seem not well to understand, and consequently give it to every thing, for which they have a theological horror. Were they to confine its use to the doctrine of Matthias Flacius, that "*original sin is the very substance of man*," or even to "*something created with the mind itself*," or to "*a defect in the faculties*," it would be easy to see the fiction against which they are contending, and desirable to join in the outcry against it. But when they so extend its meaning as to embrace the doctrine of "*the depravity of nature*," it is time to record our dissent. This doctrine was unwaveringly held by Augustine, Calvin, Howe, Flavel, Edwards, and

* A Narrative of the Embarrassments and Decline of Hamilton College, by Henry Davis, D. D., President. pp. 144, 148.

all the opposers of Pelagianism and its various modifications. Observing the early, uniform, and universal prevalence of sin in the human family, they arrived at the conclusion, that *human nature* is depraved, and consented to the doctrine of the Apostle, that by "nature we are children of wrath." By this phraseology they intended to teach, that sin has its origin in our nature independently of the circumstances in which we are placed. And, as a consequence, they also taught that regeneration is a change wrought in the nature of man, in distinction from the circumstances in which he is placed; and which, in their turn, might work regeneration in him by moral suasion. We are not prepared to deny, but *some* of these giants in theology used the words *physical depravity* to denote *the depravity of nature*; yet we have no hesitation in saying that, while they did not hold the rude notions so injuriously imputed to the Fathers by Mr. Finney in his sermon on the "Traditions of the Elders," they explicitly taught a *physical operation* of the Spirit, in distinction from moral suasion in regeneration. But no one of them seems to have supposed, that this *physical influence* is used to regenerate "*the very substance of man*." Mr. Flavel, who inculcates a "*physical*," though not a "*coercive*" influence of the Spirit, says, "*the natural essence and faculties of the soul remain still, but it is divested of its old qualities, and endued with new ones.*"* By "*depravity of nature*" no one of them meant, that any faculty of the mind is lost, nor by "*physical influence*" of the Spirit in regeneration did they mean, that any new faculty is created. They maintained, that in this work, a spiritual renovation only is accomplished. Now, though these terms in ancient theological writers, mean nothing else than is continually held and taught in orthodox schools and churches, and though only a very limited acquaintance with the phraseology of mental and theological science is requisite to understand the agreement, yet our modern explorators seem not to have discovered it. Owing either to their neglect of these writers, or to familiarity with misrepresentations of them, they seem to be mainly in the dark respecting their theology, and to be haunted by every gloomy image of it, which their own minds can form. Whenever they approach a subject which the strong intellect of former ages has discussed, they begin

* Method of Grace. Sermons IV., V.

to be agitated, and to demur at views, which are associated only in their own minds with its phraseology, and to make such denials as imply, that others hold certain doctrines which they regard as contemptible.

Thus Mr. Finney, in opening his sermon entitled "*Sinners bound to change their own hearts*," seems to be contending with other theologians, and disclaiming doctrines which by some mighty influence had been wrought into all the practical views of religion. Having chosen as his text Ezek. 18 : 31. "*Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die,*" he proceeds to show ; "what is *not* meant by this requirement." And he says, 1st. That it does not mean the fleshly heart, or that bodily organ, which is the seat of animal life. 2d. That it does not mean a new soul. We have one soul and do not need another. Nor, 3d. Are we required to create any new faculties of body or mind. We have now all the powers of moral agency. We are just as God made us, and do not need any alteration in the substance of soul or body. Nor, 4th. Does it mean, that we are to bring to pass any *constitutional change in ourselves*." In these four negations Mr. Finney is evidently contending with some real or supposed antagonist. Were it possible to believe, that he had ever heard of Matthias Flacius, or Cyriac Spangenberg, we might conjecture that he had a remote reference to them. But as this is highly improbable, we ask, with whom is he contending? Do not his negations imply, that these *physical depravities* exist in the theology which some of his hearers have been taught? Or are we to understand, that his own mind is entangled in the physics of matter? If this be his view of the "depravity of nature," and he has ever tried to regenerate himself, we do not wonder that he pronounces it "an impossible dogma." By a strange notion that the doctrine of the depravity of nature implies an overthrow of all the faculties of the mind—an earthquake in the original constitution of the soul, overwhelming perception, reason, affections and memory in one common ruin, and reducing man to mere idiocy—Mr. Finney and his coadjutors have been led to declare war against it. And because it is evident, that these faculties are not annihilated, and that man has all the powers requisite to obedience, they triumph. Next, they confound the meaning of the term "powers," when used to denote the faculties of the mind with that of "*power*," when used to de-

note the ability of the will in unregenerate men to use these faculties in the service of God; and thus they suppose themselves to have demonstrated, that the nature of man is not depraved. They seem to believe, that the doctrine in question involves the loss of these faculties; and to these they give the name of *physical depravity*,* and this they represent in various ways as the "*tradition of the elders*," or the doctrine of the fathers and of those, who coincide with them. Hence they seem to feel, that they do valiantly for truth, religion, and the human constitution, if they reject this doctrine and render it a "by-word and a hissing." In the whole circle of approved Christian writers not a single individual had been found, who teaches, that fallen man has not a soul, or that he has not perception, reason, affections, and memory. Who ever denied their existence? In what author is it possible to find the doctrine of an annihilation of these faculties? In our limited reading we do not recollect to have found the terms *depravity of nature* used to denote such a destruction of the human powers. Those who employ them in theology do not intend thereby even to intimate the absence of these faculties, but only of a *heart, or will* to use them in obedience. By "*inability*" they mean, that there is no "*POWER*," notwithstanding the existence of these "*POWERS*," to obey God.† Their declaration has no reference to the

* "For if the *nature itself* be depraved, if depravity is *constitutional and something created with the mind itself*, then regeneration must be physical. It must remedy the defect in the constitution." Sermons on important subjects, p. 81. The phrases in italics are doubtless intended to be synonymous. This is evidently true of "*nature itself*," and "*constitutional*." What Mr. Finney means by a *constitutional change* may be learned in the eighth page. It is there described as the "*re-creation of the faculties*," "the implantation of a holy taste." See pp. 5—8 compared with pp. 81, and 82.

† President Edwards and others, who strenuously held the doctrine of the "*depravity of nature*," but deny "*natural inability*," thus explain their meaning. "We are said to be *naturally* unable to do a thing, when we cannot do it if we will, because what is commonly called nature does not allow of it, or because of some impending defect, or obstacle, that is extrinsic to the will, either in the faculty of the understanding, constitution of the body, or external objects. Freedom of the Will, Sec. 4. The doctrine of "*ability commensurate with obligation*," Edwards unequivocally rejects. In his work on Original Sin, p. 516, he quotes Dr. John Taylor as saying, "when men have not sufficient *power* to do their duty, they have no duty to do." "We may safely and assuredly conclude, that mankind in all parts of the world have SUFFICIENT power to do the duty which God requires of them, and that he requires NO MORE than they have sufficient powers to do." "God has given powers equal to the duty which he expects." On these and similar passages, Edwards says, "these things fully imply,

existence of these faculties, but to the heart, or will: and in this respect all the sound divines, from Augustine to this day, have had no hesitancy in teaching, that *no mere man is able to keep the commands of God*. But this view of the subject is rejected by modern reformers in theology and religion, not because it is unscriptural, but because it is inconsistent with their own inferences from solitary passages in the Scriptures, with the laws of mind, or with their own consciousness.

Here it is proper to say, that our fathers were wont to regard the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice. But recently we are taught to read as of equal authority the lessons of "*common sense*," "*intuitive perception*," and "*internal consciousness*." Though Mr. Finney does not seem to have explicitly enjoined this duty, his reasonings frequently imply it. In his discourse on making a new heart, he assures us, that all the declarations of the Bible "are in accordance with the true philosophy of mind." By "true philosophy," he probably means his own philosophy, as stated in his "sermons;" for on this he seems to rely *almost* to the exclusion of the Scriptures. But though he does not explicitly tell us what he means, yet a friend, a patron, a greater than he has declared, that "there is a deep and universal consciousness in all men as to the freedom of choice, and in denying this you reverse God's constitution of man. You assume that God gave a deceptive constitution to mind, or a deceptive consciousness. Now I think, that God is as honest in the moral world as he is in the natural world. I believe, that in our consciousness he tells the truth; and that the natural constitution and universal feelings and perceptions of men, are the voice of God speaking the truth; and if the truth is not here, where may we expect to find it."* Now we would observe, that the views here said to be taught by the universal consciousness of all men, as to the freedom of choice, and which Dr. Beecher calls "the voice of God," are the very same

that men have in their own natural ability sufficient means to avoid sin, and to be perfectly free from it, and so from all the bad consequences of it. And if the means are *sufficient*, then there is no need of *more*, and therefore there is no need of Christ dying in order to it." ***** "Hence then, without Christ, and his redemption, and without any grace at all, *MERE JUSTICE* makes *sufficient provision* for our being free from sin and misery, by our own power." By these, and many other passages it is plain, that Edwards regarded the doctrine of "*ability commensurate with obligation*" as at variance with the provisions of grace, and utterly unfounded.

* Views on Theology, by Lyman Beecher, D. D. 2d. Ed. p. 45.

with those which were exploded by Edwards in his Treatise on the Will. Here we have an extensive volume of revelation! Wherever it is admitted to be canonical, it will undoubtedly produce some changes in the system of Theology. This species of revelation has been generally regarded by sound divines as rather apocryphal. If Mr. Finney has adopted it, there can be no doubt, but by its aid he has been able to make essential modifications in those doctrines, which were derived from the Scriptures alone. What these modifications are it is important fully to understand.

I. RESPECTING THE HEART.

"It is that deep seated, but voluntary preference of the mind, which lies back of all its other voluntary affections and emotions, and from which they take their character."*

II. CHARACTER OF INFANTS.

Mr. Finney says, "there are two systems." The one maintains, "that infants have no moral character at all, until they have committed actual transgression: that their first moral actions are invariably sinful, but that previous to moral action they are neither sinful, nor holy. God might annihilate them without injustice, or he might bestow upon them eternal life as a free and unearned gift." The other system maintains, that "infants have a sinful nature which they have inherited from Adam." The first system Mr. Finney adopts and defends, but the last he condemns in unqualified terms. To reconcile *his* doctrine with the salvation of infants by grace, he makes *the grace to consist in the gift of existence*, and says, "now every infant owes its very existence to the grace of God in Jesus Christ, and if it dies previously to actual transgression, it is just as absolutely indebted to Christ for eternal life, as if it had been the greatest sinner on earth."†

III. TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

"I am to show what is meant by the *carnal mind* as used in the text.‡ It is a voluntary state of mind. It is

* Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 8. † Ibid. p. 159, 160. ‡ Ibid. p. 61.

that state of supreme selfishness, in which all men are previous to their conversion. It is a state of mind in which probably they are not born, but into which they appear to fall very early after their birth. The gratification of their appetites is made by them the supreme object of desire and pursuit and becomes the law of their lives."* The doctrine of a depraved nature he unequivocally rejects.

IV. ELECTION.

"The Elect then must be those, *whom* God foresaw could be converted under the wisest administration of his government; that, administering it in a way that would be most beneficial to all worlds, exerting such an amount of moral influence on every individual, as would result upon the whole in the greatest good to his divine kingdom, he foresaw that certain individuals could with this wisest amount of moral influence be reclaimed, and for this reason they were chosen to eternal life."† "The elect were chosen to eternal life, because God foresaw, that in the perfect exercise of their freedom they could be induced to repent and embrace the Gospel." "Sinners, your salvation or damnation is as absolutely dependent upon your own choice, as if God neither knew nor designed any thing about it."‡

V. REGENERATION.

"A change of heart then, consists in changing the controlling preference of the mind in regard to the end of pursuit." "A new heart is the choice of Jehovah as the supreme ruler; a deep seated and abiding preference of his laws and government and character and person as the supreme legislator and governor of the universe," "To constitute a change of heart, it must not only be voluntary, but it must be a change in the *governing preference of the mind.*"§

VI. AGENCY IN REGENERATION.

"There is a sense in which conversion is the work of God. There is a sense in which it is the effect of truth. There is a sense in which the preacher does it. And it is

* Rom. 8: 7. † Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 116. ‡ Ibid. pp. 224, 225. § Ibid. p. 229.

also the appropriate work of the sinner himself. The fact is, that the actual turning is the sinner's own act.*

VII. MODE OF THE SPIRIT'S OPERATION IN REGENERATION.

"Thus the striving of the Spirit of God is not a physical scuffling, but a debate, a strife, not of body with body, but of mind with mind, and that in the action and reaction of vehement argumentation. From these remarks it is easy to answer the question sometimes put by individuals, who seem to be entirely in the dark upon this subject, whether in converting the soul the Spirit acts directly on the mind, or on the truth. This is the same nonsense as if you should ask whether an earthly advocate, who has gained his cause, did it by acting on the jury, or on his argument." "The power which God exerts in the conversion of a soul, is moral power. It is that kind of power by which a statesman sways the mind of a senate, or by which an advocate moves and bows the heart of a jury."†

VIII. INABILITY OF GOD TO PREVENT SIN.

"This law is moral, not physical, a government of motive, not of force. It is vain to talk of his omnipotence preventing sin. If infinite motives will not prevent it, it cannot be prevented under a moral government, and to maintain the contrary is absurd and a contradiction. To administer moral laws is not the object of physical power. To maintain, therefore, that the physical omnipotence of God can prevent sin, is to talk nonsense."‡ "Sinners can go to hell in spite of God."§

IX. ABILITY OF A SINNER TO MAKE A NEW HEART.

"As therefore, God requires men to make to themselves a new heart on pain of eternal death, it is the strongest possible evidence, that they are able to do it." "The sinner that minds the flesh, can change his mind and mind God."||

We might in this place cite numerous instances in which he inculcates such a theory of the assistance of the spirit in prayer, as necessarily to imply inspiration. This branch of

* Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 20. † Ibid. pp. 28, 30. ‡ Ibid. p. 58. § Mr. Finney's Sermons in N. Y. Evang. Aug. 25, 1835. || Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 18, 38.

the subject, however, has been explicitly stated in a former number. It is well known, that during the last twelve years these remarkable doctrines have been inculcated by the author in various parts of our land. They have been published. The volume which contains them, has been honoured with more than one edition. A newspaper devoted to his interests has almost continually published his doctrines. The things contained in the first two volumes and a part of the third had gone before the world, been repeated by his satellites and received by hundreds and thousands, while the author was a member in "*good and regular standing*" of a large presbytery in the commercial emporium of our country, yet no effectual process was instituted against him. The community were not warned to beware of his errors, which were thus poured like a flood upon them. And when these errors were embodied and presented with a few additional ones to the General Assembly for condemnation, his friends professed to be ignorant of their existence in the Church. Yet these things were not taught in a corner. They were not only preached and published in the city, but during several years previous to his residence there. Mr. Finney had been celebrated as an itinerant minister. In some sections of the country there is scarcely an important congregation in which he had not inculcated these doctrines; for in the preface of his sermons he says, "in preaching as an Evangelist I found it especially important to discuss these and other topics, and have almost every where found many misapprehensions and misunderstandings existing in the minds of the multitude on most of these points." These doctrines found their way into many congregations too obscure to attract his personal attention. They were conveyed to them through the pulpits by his disciples, and to their conference meetings and fire-sides by these *volumes*, by the weekly numbers of the *N. Y. Evangelist*, by the *tracts* and other publications of the same school in theology.* They came not as errors, but as the truths which had renovated the American churches. Thus in many instances they gained the attention, excited the feelings, shaped the opinions of individuals, produced discord in doctrine, alienation of affections, and irregularities in conduct. In these

* It is not to be inferred, that the great body of *stated* ministers in the interior of New-York approve the views of Mr. Finney. In many cases these things have been done in opposition to their wishes and advice.

circumstances it may perhaps be safely conceded, that some *cannot* perceive these doctrines to be errors, but of their existence few discerning men have the semblance of a doubt.

But it is not so much our design to examine the practical effect of these views on the community, as to trace their *theological* posterity. In the works before us, we have an authentic genealogy of a *family of errors*. We are not obliged, as in other instances, to trace them through successive generations of men. They are all found in the same mind, and *Pelagianism*, as contained in the preceding extracts, is the venerable ancestor of them all. From his infancy it was remarked that he was an *uncommon child*. Unlike other children, he was by nature neither "*sinful nor holy*." Unhappily, however, very soon after his birth, he '*fell into a state of supreme selfishness*,' from which even the "*physical power of God*" could not extricate him. But he had *rare abilities*, and a "giant strength" of will, which he could hardly refrain from calling "*the strength of Omnipotence*." And therefore, he always believed himself to be one of those, who could be recovered "*with the wisest amount of moral influence*." He had elevated notions of human virtue, and would suffer no change to be made in his condition, which was not produced by "*his own act*." He was willing, indeed, that the Holy Spirit should operate on him, provided it were only *as an earthly advocate acts on a jury*. He was willing that '*motives should be gathered from all worlds and poured in a focal blaze on his mind*.' He was anxious to receive good counsel from his friends, and reverently to hear divine truth; but the change from "*supreme selfishness*" he declared to be his own "*appropriate work*;" and he was at length accustomed to say, that he had effected it by "*his own act*." It was natural to suppose, that the theological children of such a system would have some remarkable characteristics. In Pelagius and Celestius it had produced Perfectionism, and there was reason to fear, that in the mind of Mr. Finney, it would generate the same progeny. In various parts of the land, the system had been earnestly inculcated. Its most sagacious disciples were beginning to declare themselves to "*be perfect*," to have "*rolled the responsibility of their future and eternal obedience on an everlasting arm*;" to receive "*immediate communications from God*," to be "*personally united to him*," and to have "*entered into rest*." These heresies were early demonstrated to have had their origin

in the system itself. As Mr. Finney had been the Apostle of this system in these latter days, it was intimated that his doctrines, as inculcated in his preaching and by the press, had tended to produce these impieties. This view of the subject was indignantly repelled even by the candid ones amongst his followers. The thought, that *his doctrines* had produced such results, they could not for a moment entertain. Although others had no doubt that Mr. Finney was the true parent of Perfectionism, they had more opinion of his caution, than to suppose he could soon be induced openly to own and adopt it. But, to the amazement of all, he now comes forth, bringing with him for induction into the Church, the doctrine of *the perfection of the saints in this life, of the responsibility of Christ for his people, of immediate communications to them from God, and of their entrance into rest even in this world.*

These last views were not developed till he had abandoned the Presbyterian Church. Even since their publication, it is almost inconceivable by those, who have heard of him chiefly as a promoter of revivals, and have been unwilling to listen to the notes of warning, so long honestly and responsively sounded by *individuals*—it is almost inconceivable, that he has inculcated these fanatical doctrines. Even the Christian Spectator,* though it fears “he may be liable to misconstruction and injure the consciences of many weak and pious persons,” declares, “we do not believe he means any thing more than we should fully admit—the possibility and duty of obedience to God in all things commanded.” But this view of his meaning it is impossible to sustain either by individual sentences, or the evident design of his Lectures on these subjects. His errors are written so legibly, that he who runs may read. Mr. Finney now stands before the community as a practical illustration of the effects of rejecting the doctrine, that *human nature is depraved*; and of believing, that in regeneration and sanctification *the work of the Spirit is confided chiefly to the understanding.* That the relation of these Pelagian views to the most fanatical errors may no longer be misunderstood, it is desirable to know precisely the theological results, which they have produced in the mind of Mr. Finney. These we shall now state, and endeavour to confirm, by such quotations as shall render them unquestionable.

* June 1837, p. 342.

Of these results, we specify *first*, the doctrine that **MANY SAINTS ARE PERFECT IN THIS LIFE**. This he believes and inculcates. To exhibit his view of Christian perfection, it is necessary to analyze his principal sermon on this subject.* His text is, Matt. 5: 48. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." He professes to show, I. "What Christian perfection is not." II. "What Christian perfection is." He declares it to be "perfect obedience to the law of God. The law of God," he says, "requires perfect, disinterested, impartial benevolence, love to God and to our neighbour. It requires, that we should be actuated by the same feeling, and act on the same principles that God acts upon." Though in comparison with the declaration of the Saviour, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself," this exposition may be regarded as rather imperfect; yet if in these volumes there were no counteracting declarations, we should not suspect their author of Antinomianism. But *formally* to reject the moral law as a rule of life, is far from being a uniform trait in Antinomians. While some of them openly reject it, others supersede its use by adopting impulses as their rule of life, and others by "rolling the responsibility of obedience on their Maker." If the theology of Mr. Finney shall be found to contain either of these elements, it must, notwithstanding his apparent recognition of the law, be pronounced Antinomian.

Having shown his view of Christian perfection, he declares it to be, III. a duty. This is argued, 1. "From the fact, that God requires it." 2. "Because God has no right to require any thing less." 3. "Should any one contend, that the Gospel requires less holiness than the law, I would ask him to say just how much less it requires." "IV. Christian perfection is attainable, or practicable in this life." This also is argued, "1. From the fact, that it is commanded." 2. From the fact, "that there is natural ability to be perfect." * * * "but the great inquiry is, is it attainable? I answer, yes. I believe it is."—"1. God wills it." "2. All the promises and prophecies of God, that respect the sanctification of believers in this world, are to be understood, of course, of their *perfect sanctification*." "3. *Perfect sanctification*

* Lectures to Christians, Lec. 8. p. 252.

is the great blessing promised throughout the Bible." "4. The perfect sanctification of believers is the very *object for which the Holy Ghost is promised.*" "5. If it is not a practicable duty to be perfectly holy in this world, then it will follow, that the devil has so completely accomplished his design in corrupting mankind, that Jesus Christ is at a fault, and has *no way to sanctify his people but to take them out of the world.*" "6. If perfect sanctification is not attainable in this world, it must be either from a want of motives in the Gospel, or a want of sufficient power in the Spirit of God."

Were it allowable in so grave a subject to give advice respecting the *perfection of a discourse*, we should not hesitate to refer the author for his improvement to some good treatise on homiletics. In testimony however, of his difficulty in procuring evidence to sustain the doctrine of perfection in this life, it is proper to say, that of the eleven particulars of proof under the last two heads, *three* are precisely the *same*. "God requires it." "It is commanded." "God wills it." In the preceeding extracts, perfect sanctification is only another name for perfection. In these two branches of the discourse very little Scripture is cited except under the declaration, that "perfect sanctification is the great blessing promised throughout the Bible." In his citations he seems not to have considered, that there is a difference between justification and sanctification, that the former is immediately completed, and that it is an *act* of God, by which, on the ground of the righteousness and death of Christ, he pardons all our sins, accepteth us as righteous in his sight, and releases us from suffering the penalty of the law, so that, "there is no condemnation to them, that are in Christ Jesus." But the latter, instead of being an *act*, is a work of God, begun indeed at the same time with our justification, and completed only when the soul is made perfect in glory. In its very nature it is progressive; and hence Christians, whatever be their present degree of sanctification, are commanded to "grow in grace," and to add to their faith *virtue*, and to *virtue, knowledge, brotherly kindness and charity.* The Scripture uniformly rejects as untrue the statement, that any are perfect in this life, and shows that all pretenders to it are loathsome in the sight of God. The doctrine of justification is sustained by its appropriate representations in the Scriptures. If any individual were to set forth, that it is a progressive work, he would be likely to confound the pas-

sages which relate to justification with those that pertain to sanctification, and to sustain his position chiefly by the latter. Thus on the other hand, to support the doctrine of perfect sanctification in this life, a similar resort is had to the passages which pertain to justification. Hence a great portion of those on which Mr. Finney, in common with Mr. Wesley, relies to sustain perfect sanctification, belong solely to justification, or redemption. To the unlearned and superficial they may appear completely to establish his doctrine, but by those accustomed to theological investigations, they will be seen at a glance to be irrelevant to his purpose and a perversion of the Scriptures.

Mr. Finney proceeds next to the removal of *objections*. These are, "1st. The power of habit is so great, that we ought not to expect to be perfectly sanctified in this life." "2d. *Many physical difficulties* have been created by a life of sin, which cannot be overcome or removed." "3d. The Bible is against this doctrine, where it says 'there is not a just man on the earth, that liveth and sinneth not.'" "Answer. Suppose the Bible does say, 'there is *not* one on earth,' it does not say there *cannot* be one. Or it may have been true at that time, or under (that) dispensation, that there was not one man in the world who was perfectly sanctified; and yet it may not follow, that at this time, or under the gospel dispensation, there is no one who lives without sin. 'For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did,' Heb. 7: 9, i. e., the gospel did." "4th. The apostles admit that they were not perfect." "Answer. I know the apostle Paul says, in one place, 'not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.' But it is not said he continued so till his death, or that he never did attain to perfect sanctification, and the manner in which he speaks in the remainder of the verse, looks as if he expected to become so. 'But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' Nor does it appear to me to be true, that in this passage he is speaking of perfect sanctification, but rather of perfect knowledge. And the apostle John speaks of himself as if he loved God perfectly. But whatever may be the truth, as to the actual character of the apostles, it does not follow, because they were not perfect, that no others can be." *** "5th. But is it not presumption for us to think we can be better than the apostles and primitive Christians?" "Answer.

What is the presumption in the case? Is it not a fact, that we have far greater advantages for religious experience, than the primitive churches?" Of these he mentions "the benefit of their experience," "the complete Scriptures," "the state of the world," "the near approach of the millenium." "6th. But so many profess to be perfect who are not so, that I cannot believe that any are perfect in this life. Answer. "How many profess to be rich, who are not?" "7th. So many who profess perfection have run into error and fanaticism, that I am afraid to think of it." * * * "8th. But do you really think that any body ever has been perfectly holy in this world?" Answer. "I have reason to believe there have been many. It is highly probable that Enoch and Elijah were free from sin, before they were taken out of the world. And in different ages of the Church there have been numbers of Christians, who were intelligent and upright, and had nothing that could be said against them, and have testified that they themselves lived free from sin."

In this section of his discourse, Mr. Finney informs us, of what we had all along suspected, that he had recently read Mr. Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection; that he "finds some expressions in it to which he objects," but "believes it to be rather the expressions than the sentiments." With this abatement, he pronounces it an "admirable book," and wishes every member of his church to read it. We have made these extended quotations, partly because so many do not believe Mr. Finney to have inculcated the actual *perfection of any in this life*, and partly because it is desirable fully to exhibit the first theological offspring of the system which he preached while an Evangelist. This is Perfectionism. Its features will be easily discovered by every attentive reader; but those who have been acquainted with its practical operations, will recognise in these extracts, the early conversations of those, who have eventually rejected the Law, the Gospel, and the ordinances of Christ. The doctrine of a new dispensation, in which some shall be perfect, is here distinctly intimated. An attempt is made to counteract the declarations of the apostles respecting their own imperfections, and to hold them forth as perfect. Under the consciousness of failure in this project, it is demanded, *where is the presumption of supposing, that we can be better than the apostles and primitive Chris-*

tians? And finally, the author declares his unqualified belief, that *many are perfectly holy in this world*. His course is precisely the same as that, which has been adopted by others in former times, who have denied that human nature is depraved, and rejected its correlative doctrines. In addition to those mentioned in preceding articles, it is proper here to say that, according to the fourth article of the Errours of the Anabaptists, "set down by Pontanus and Bullinger," *"they rejected the doctrine of original sin, and those doctrines that depend upon it;"* *"also that children, whereas they do neither good nor evil, are under grace and without sin."* And according to the ninth article, *"they separated themselves from all other churches, accounting themselves only pure and holy, without sin."**

Here we are anxious to know, whether the original system of doctrine which brought Mr. Finney to believe and inculcate, that *perfect holiness* is attained by many in this life, is capable of working any further changes in his views. It is well known, that Mr. Wesley stopped on the ground where Mr. Finney stood at the close of his lecture on perfection. He inculcated, indeed, some remarkable notions of the witness of the Spirit, and then contented himself with believing that Christian perfection is compatible with errours in opinion and practice.† With the exception of these abatements in the demands of the moral law, he pressed on men their obligation to obey it, and to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. If it be asked, why his system carried *him* no further? We reply, that in his own mind it was a compound system, a species of semi-Pelagianism. When it had brought him to this point, it had spent its force. By variations in its proportions, it early wrought things more remarkable in some of his *disciples*, than it had done in *himself*. But after compelling him to adopt the doctrine of perfection, does Mr. Finney's system leave him in the quiet possession of the views of obligation, which he had previously held? Is he still found pressing on men the duty of immediate obedience? Does he now vehemently urge them to work out their salvation? Ah! no. Now he complains and says, "it is all *work, work, WORK.*"‡ Instead of urging men by the consideration of

* Heresiography, by E. Plagitt, London, 1646, p. 13, 14.

† Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 14, 15.

‡ Lectures to Christians, p. 269.

their responsibility, as he used to do, almost to the exclusion of dependence on God ;—instead of saying, “ your salvation or damnation is as much suspended on your choice, as if God neither knew nor designed any thing about it ;” he now transfers the work to God : and instead of the obligation of the saints to obey Christ, he teaches *the responsibility of Christ for their conduct*. His mode of stating this doctrine will be seen in the following extracts :

“ It is just so with regard to sanctification and redemption. I cannot dwell on them so particularly as I wished. Until an individual receives Christ, he does not cease from his own works. The moment he does that, by this very act, he throws the responsibility on Christ. The moment the mind does fairly yield itself up to Christ, the responsibility comes upon him : just as the person who undertakes to lead a blind man is responsible for his safe conduct. The believer, by the act of faith, pledges Christ for his obedience and sanctification. By giving himself up to Christ, all the veracity of the Godhead is put at stake, that he shall be led aright, or made holy.”*

* * * “ And if the wife does not obey her husband, she has it in her power to bring him into great trouble, disgrace, and expense. In like manner, Jesus Christ is Lord over his Church ; and if he does not actually restrain his Church from sin, he has it to answer for, and is brought into great trouble and reproach by the misconduct of his people. * * * Every believer is so a part of Jesus Christ, and so perfectly united to him, that whatever any of them may be guilty of, Jesus Christ takes upon himself to answer for. This is abundantly taught in the Bible.”† “ Oh, if believers would only throw themselves wholly on Christ, and make him responsible by placing themselves entirely at his controul, they would know his power to save, and would live without sin.”‡

The strongest avowal of Antinomianism made in the first number of the Perfectionist, a paper recently published in New-Haven, Connecticut, by those who openly rejected the law as the rule of life, and also the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, is the declaration, that they had *rolled the responsibility of their future and eternal obedience on an everlasting arm*. This idea of rolling the responsibility on Christ, and of making him answerable for the con-

* Lectures to Christians, p. 294. † Ibid. p. 240. ‡ Ibid. p. 345.

duct of his people, is a prominent trait of Antinomianism. But it is not common with those, who hold its doctrines, to declare them quite as plainly as Mr. Finney has done. In all our reading, except in the publications of modern Perfectionists, we remember to have found but one corresponding sentence. Amongst the "unsavoury speeches" of the Antinomians condemned by the Synod at Cambridge, in 1637, is the only parallel which now occurs to us in the English language. "If Christ will let me sinne, let him looke to it, upon his honor be it."* Instead of striving to obey the precept "keep thy heart with all diligence," it pretends to hold Christ responsible for human indolence, errors, and sins. Instead of following the example of David, who kept himself from his iniquity; or of Paul, who "kept under his body and brought it into subjection," it abandons the way "of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." In the discourses of those, who are any where *tolerated* as the ministers of the gospel, we are amazed to find such phrases, as "*throw the whole responsibility upon Christ!*" "*Pledge Christ for the obedience and sanctification of his people!*" "*Whatever sin any one of them may be guilty of, Jesus Christ takes it upon him to answer for!*" "*If he does not actually restrain his Church from sin, he has it to answer for, and is brought into great trouble and reproach by the misconduct of his people!*" They are not merely Antinomian. They are awfully impious. And although we do not call them "*blasphemous*," as the venerable puritan of London† has called the corresponding passage, yet they come so near it, that it is impossible to utter them without fearful criminality.

As these views of the responsibility of Christ for our obedience, evidently supersede all obligation to obey the law, it becomes necessary to find some other guide to duty, if indeed there can be any duty where there is no obligation. This is uniformly sought by those who hold the doctrine of a "rolling responsibility;" and Mr. Finney is not suffered to be an exception. By precluding him from inculcating an immediate operation of the Spirit on the heart, and thus preparing it to recognise its own responsibility to obey the written law of God, his original system confines the work of the Spirit chiefly to the understanding, and compels

* Heresiography, p. 114.

† Rev. E. Pagitt.

him now to teach the fanatical doctrine of IMMEDIATE REVELATIONS. Thus he says, that "knowledge, to avail any thing towards its object, must be such as will influence the mind. The will must be controuled. And to do this, the mind must have such a view of things, as to excite *emotion* corresponding to the object in view." And though man is "capable of understanding the historical facts" and "doctrinal propositions" of religion; yet, as all our knowledge of spiritual things is "by analogy," or comparison, "it is easily seen, that all the ideas conveyed to our minds in this way, must be extremely imperfect, and that we do not after all, get the true idea in our minds." In his view the same difficulty exists in deriving ideas from "words." The call, which the necessities of his system make for the Spirit, *is to communicate ideas*. Under this call, Mr. Finney proceeds to quote and apply to Christians indiscriminately, those passages which relate solely to the inspiration of the apostles. In regard to the difficulty of obtaining these ideas in any other manner, he says, "it is manifest that none but the Spirit of God can supply this defect from a single consideration, that all teaching by words, whether by Jesus Christ or by apostles, or by any inspired, or uninspired teacher, coming merely through the senses, can never put the mind in possession of the idea of spiritual things. The kind of teaching which we need, is this. We want some one to teach us the things of religion, who is not obliged to depend on words, or to reach our minds through the medium of the senses. We want some way in which the ideas themselves can be brought to our minds, and not merely the signs of the ideas. We need a teacher, who can directly approach the mind itself, and not through the senses, and who can exhibit the ideas of religion without being obliged to use words. This the Spirit of God can do. The manner in which the Spirit of God does this, is what we can never know in this world. But the fact is undeniable, that he can reach the mind without the use of words, and can put our minds in possession of the ideas themselves, of which the types, or figures, of the human teacher are only the signs or imperfect representatives."* Here Mr. Finney distinctly avows the doctrine, that Christians are taught the ideas of religion without the use of words; for he says, "the manner

* Lectures to Christians, p. 303.

in which the Spirit of God does this, is what we can never know in this world." And indeed in this very discourse he censures theological students for labouring "to get the views of all the great teachers, the tomes of the Fathers and Doctors, and every body's opinion as to what the Bible means, but the opinion of the Holy Ghost." What a field for fanaticism! "*The opinion of the Holy Ghost*"* *respecting the meaning of the Scriptures! Filling the mind with ideas in a manner inexplicable, and altogether independent of words!* This last is the grand characteristic of the inspirations of Satan. According to Doctor Whitby, the devil "is represented in the Scriptures as the great tempter to sin, which he can only be immediately by raising ideas in our brains."† We know, that God guides men by written truth, and he has cautioned them against any other ideas of religious duty, except those which are taught in his word. But Satan guides them by unwritten suggestions. He dares not responsibly to publish a volume of his own revelations, and consequently he fills the minds of men with such ideas, as the exigencies of each case seem to require. He who relies on these suggestions as the guide of his life, will be led by them directly to the gates of death.

Having brought Mr. Finney to believe and inculcate, that the Holy Spirit communicates to the saints ideas of religion without the use of words, his system, next, compels him to believe, **THAT CHRISTIANS ENTER INTO REST EVEN IN THIS LIFE.** This is a distinguishing doctrine of modern Perfectionists. It is true, indeed, that Mr. Finney seems to march up to this, as well as to some others of their errors, with a hesitating step. Whilst climbing up to this earthly heaven, he was evidently preparing a ladder on which to descend, if the atmosphere should not happen to be agreeable. Though in many parts of his lecture on this subject, he struggled hard to avoid the perilous steps, by which his predecessors in this doctrine had ascended, and though he actually succeeded in this attempt to some extent, yet he at last arrived at the same place, and in explicit contradiction of the Scriptures, proclaimed: *This is your rest. "It is in this life."*‡ To sustain himself in this position, he cites the 4th of Hebrews, and perverts the whole

* Lectures to Christians, p. 310.

† Whitby's Discourses, p. 165.

‡ Lectures to Christians, p. 331.

argument of the Apostle. He even quotes the passage, "there remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God." And demands, "what then was the true rest?" To this inquiry, he answers: "It was the rest, or repose of faith in Christ, or the gospel state, a cessation from our own works, and believers enter into that state by faith."* "Entering into this rest implies the yielding up of our powers so perfectly to his controul, that henceforth all our works shall be his works."† "When one ceases from his own works, he so perfectly gives up his own interest and his own will, and places himself so completely under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that whatever he does, is done by the impulse of the Spirit of Christ."‡ This identification of the works of believers with those of Christ, in consequence of being done under the *guidance* and *by the impulse of the Spirit*, is not quite the doctrine of *personal union with the Almighty*, but approaches so near as to be hardly distinguishable from it. Yet this is the regular result of the system, which Mr. Finney originally adopted and inculcated. At every step of his progress, he has professed to be a discoverer of new truths; and the last discovery which he has reported, is that the rest which remaineth for the people of God, is in this life.

Though the system of doctrine, whose operation on the mind of Mr. Finney we have now traced, requires its subjects continually to go on to perfection; it is worthy of notice, that it has not led him yet to abandon baptism and the Lord's Supper. This is probably owing to the fact, that he has not practically adopted all the principles, which he inculcates on others. It is understood, that he does not yet think *himself* to be perfect. But evidence is not wanting, that in his own mind the sanctity of these *seals of the covenant* is on the wane. In the system of measures which he has partially borrowed, and admitted into companionship with his doctrines, there is a seat which he denominates the "*anxious seat*." At the close of a discourse, he is wont to say to all, who suppose they have *determined* to serve the Lord, "*There is the anxious seat.*" "*Come out and avow your determination to be on the Lord's side.*" To come to the seat is a pledge to be the Lord's. In consequence of his opinion, that it is necessary always to have something *new*

* Lectures to Christians, p. 331. † Ibid. p. 329. ‡ Ibid. p. 330.

in the Church, he was led to believe and to preach, that this *seat* holds the same place in these latter days, that *baptism* held in those of the apostles. "In the days of the apostles," he says, "*baptism* answered this purpose. The gospel was preached to the people, and then all those who were willing to be on the side of Christ, were *baptized*. It held the precise place that the anxious seat does now, as a public manifestation of their determination to be Christians."* This seems more like the "Traditions of the Elders," than any thing which Mr. Finney has specified in his favourite discourse on that subject; and it is seriously questionable, whether it does not subject those who inculcate it, to be told, "in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, for, laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the traditions of men."

It is common with those, who hold and teach the new doctrines, to deny that they have departed from Calvinism. In honour of Mr. Finney it ought to be mentioned, that with a few exceptions he has claimed no agreement with those, from whom he dissents. Not so with his apologists. Many of them believe him to be orthodox, and perhaps without even reading his books, indignantly repel the suggestion, that he has taught these doctrines. But though these great features of his system, are clearly drawn in these volumes, it must not be assumed that all his expressions are in accordance with them. Consistency is a trait with which we do not know him to have been charged, or suspected. Even in preaching these doctrines his mind seems to have been providing a way of retreat; if they should be unpopular, or his personal influence insufficient to give them currency. But he has advanced too far to retreat, so as to conceal his gross departures from sound doctrine. He has unequivocally taught, *the perfection of the saints in this life, the responsibility of Christ for the conduct of his people; that the spirit communicates ideas of religion, without the use of words; that the deeds of believers are identical with those of Christ, and that, even in this world the saints enter into rest.* It will now be known what kind of theology produces *Antinomianism*. It is related of Doctor Crisp, an apostle of English Antinomianism, in the seventeenth century, "that in his early days he was a favourer of Arminianism." "He set out in a legal

* Lectures on Revivals, p. 248.

way of preaching, in which he was exceedingly zealous;*” and though with the exception, *that the rigour of the law is abated by Christ*, he professedly held, to the end of his days, that “in respect of the rules of righteousness, as matter of obedience, we are under the law still,”† yet his other doctrines were deemed to be entirely subversive of its authority. Hence Mr. Flavel, and other godly men, did not hesitate to denominate them Antinomianism, to write the most serious warnings against them, and to place their author in the same class with Eaton, Town, and Saltmarsh.‡ And though Mr. Finney also declares the moral law to be the rule of life, yet he inculcates doctrines unfriendly to its completeness as a rule of duty, and subversive of its authority. Instead of saying, “The word of the Lord is a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path,” he teaches us to look to God for ideas of duty without the use of words. Instead of preaching, “be ye doers of the word,” he “throws the whole responsibility upon Christ,” and declares, “that if he does not restrain his Church from sin, he has it to answer for.” What else can more effectually subvert the law? What else can render men more independent of it? This is Antinomianism. It is the legitimate offspring of Pelagian, or Arminian Theology.§ Henceforth it may abandon the name of “Ultra-Calvinism.” It is destined to be known as the half way house between Arminianism and Infidelity.

In the history of the Church, Mr. Finney does not appear to be more orthodox than in its theology. Whether he has any way of arriving “*without the use of words*” at ideas of what occurred in former centuries, we are not informed in his discourses. That he has some method unknown to the less favoured sons of the Church is inferable from the fact, that he represents President Edwards as having written “a laboured defence of the rights and duties of laymen” to exhort in public meetings;|| whereas, they who rely on his *writings* for information, understand him to have denied that they have such rights and duties. There is, however, one other instance in which his information is still more remarkable. Before its publication, we knew that the Rev. Mr. Burchard had preached, that Mormonism, or the

* Brook's Lives of the Puritans, Vol. II. p. 472. † Crisp's Works, Vol. II. p. 631. ‡ Rise and Growth of Antinomianism, by Rev. J. Flavel. § See Letter to Rev. John Wesley, by Augustus Toplady. || Lectures on Revivals, p. 239.

Perfectionists will be along in a fortnight after a revival.* But we had not then learned, that this is an invariable consequence of a revival. But Mr. Finney is more explicit. He says, "I find in history, that a sect of Perfectionists has grown out of every great and general revival of religion that ever took place. And this is one of the devil's masterpieces to counteract a revival. He knows, that if the Church were brought up to a proper standard of holiness, it would be a speedy death blow to his power on earth. And he takes this course to defeat the efforts of the Church, for elevating the standard of piety, by frightening Christians from marching right up to the point, and aiming to live perfectly conformed to the will of God. And so successful has he been, that the moment you begin to crowd the Church up to be holy, and give up all their sins, somebody will cry out, 'Why, this leads to Perfectionism;' and thus give it a bad name, and put it down."† We should have been obliged to Mr. Finney if he had told us in what history he found this statement. "A sect of Perfectionists grown out of every great and general revival!" Has it come to this, that to cover his own mistakes, and those of his satellites, he dares to bring the genuine works of the Spirit into contempt! What sect of Perfectionists "grew out" of the revival on the day of Pentecost? What Perfectionists have grown "out of" any other genuine revival, from the time of the apostles to this day? Did the Perfectionism of Pelagius and Celestius "grow out" of a great and general revival? Or was it not the legitimate result of the same system, which has produced these effects in the mind of Mr. Finney himself? Did the Perfectionism of the Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit, in the thirteenth and fourteenth century "grow out" of a revival of religion? Did the Crispian Perfectionism of England in the seventeenth century "grow out" of a revival of religion? And has not the Perfectionism of Mr. Finney and his friends, some of whom are still in advance of their leader, been proved to have "grown out" of Pelagian views of the will, and of the operations of the Spirit, rather than "out of a great and general revival?" In short, has there been such a revival under the preaching and measures of Mr. Finney? Has not he testified, that the "great body of converts" during the "ten years" are a dis-

* Sermons, &c. by Rev. Jed. Burchard, p. 73. † Lectures to Christians, p. 265.

grace to religion? And what other converts has he known, except those who have come into the Church under his doctrines and measures?*

But as it is desirable to understand in what circumstances gross errors and apostacies arise, it is necessary to say,

*The following extracts from a letter "to a distinguished revival minister," (understood to be Mr. Finney,) show that *he is not alone* in his views of these converts. The letter was written by the Rev. Mr. B****, late minister of the Free Church in New Haven, Conn., and formerly an Evangelist in the state of New-York. It is dated New Haven, Dec. 25, 1834, and was soon after published by the author, who had then adopted Perfectionism. "For two or three years previous to my coming to this city, I had been, as you know, most of the time engaged in promoting revivals, in protracted meetings, and in other ways. My mind was wholly occupied, or nearly so, with the condition of others. In the brief intervals of leisure, I either sought to recruit myself by mental relaxation, or else occupied myself in writing for the Evangelist, in defence of the New-Divinity system—*hence my own individual state seldom interested me, and THEN BUT FOR A MOMENT.* In the Providence of God, I was led into this city. The Church over which I was called to exercise the care as pastor, was small, * * *." &c. After making some statements concerning the change in his own views, he says to his correspondent, "let us look over the fields, where *you and others and myself* have laboured as revival ministers, and what is now their moral state? What was their state *within three months* after we left them? I have visited and revisited many of these fields, and groaned in spirit to see the *sad, frigid, carnal, contentious* state into which the churches had fallen—and fallen *very soon after our first departure* from among them," * * * * "I have inquired in returning to, or in passing through these fields—Where is Mr. A.? He was among the brightest converts. The answer has been, "He is in a *very cold state*—seldom see him at any of our meetings." How is it with B.? "*He is all absorbed in the world—MONEY-MAKING is his god.*" And with C. D. &c.? "They are distant—shun us—we can seldom see them—and *no one has any confidence in their religion.*" What has become of the Miss G—s? "They are *wholly given to dress, and vanity, and parties,* * * *." What is the state of the Church generally? "They are in a very cold and divided state—very little confidence in each other—hardness, jealousies, backbiting, &c.—and if there is any mischief going on in town, you may trace it back to some professor of religion, as its origin." * * * * "Oh! Mr. B— we are in a dreadful state—we don't know what will become of us—the world has less confidence in us, than they have ever had—they seem to doubt all religion, or else congratulate themselves on being without any—and God is grieved far away from us." * * * * Mr. B. thus concludes his letter. "I have spoken the truth in love, and may the Lord grant that you and I, who have been thus far dear friends to each other, and for several years past, affectionate co-workers, may yet again see eye to eye, and know indeed, that we are made "perfect in one" in our living Head. The testimony of the Rev. Mr. B. coincides with that of his friend Mr. Finney. In 1836, the latter said respecting the converts of the *ten preceding years*, "the great body of them are a disgrace to religion. Of what use would it be to have a thousand members added to the Church, to be just such as are now in it?" Both of these gentlemen have been prominent Evangelists. They have had opportunity to observe the results of their own labours; and without strong reasons could not be induced to despise the work of their own hands.

that when the Lord is doing a great work in the earth, it often occurs, that others profess to be *competent* to do the same thing. Thus, when the Lord by Moses was working miracles before Pharaoh in Egypt, "the magicians did in like manner with their enchantments." When Luther was preaching the *written* Gospel in Saxony and "God blessed his labour," Nicholas Storck arose, and said that he had *unwritten* communications from God. Professing to receive "ideas without the use of words," and to be commissioned to purge the Church, he rushed forward in *opposition* to the doctrines and arguments of Luther, sought out and set in order the system of the Anabaptists; which in its progress enlisted Thomas Muncer, John of Leyden, Melchior Hoffman and others, several of whom professed to be perfect, and yet their course was marked by polygamy, murder, and insurrection.

And when in the early part of the eighteenth century, the churches in America had peace, and the number of converts was increasing; then arose one David Ferris in New Milford, Conn. He entered Yale College in 1729, and left it in 1732. About three years previous to his going to college, there "appeared to be a flaming zeal for religion" in his native town. In consequence of the "dying counsel of a loose young man," the children and youth from five to more than twenty years old, were greatly excited, and began to hold private meetings. There was such an *appearance of religion*, that their pastor, the Rev. Daniel Boardman, strongly hoped, that *true Christianity* was revived. Their "zeal and warmth" were abundant. Their meetings were numerous, and frequently attended by the pastor and other persons of age and experience, who rejoiced in the "*appearance of religion*" amongst them. Several were received into the church. But the nature of this work soon began to be apparent. "Spiritual pride" manifested itself in "discerning and judging the state of others," and in prohibiting those whom they deemed "unconverted, to meet with them;" till the grave and serious abandoned the meetings of these youth, and restrained their children. The "Anabaptists" and others of Rhode Island strengthened them by letters, visits, and books; till at length the Bible fell into comparative disrepute, the fanatical leading of the Spirit was received, and sinless perfection professed. A separation from the church ensued. Of the "separates" a part confessed

their errors, and returned to the church. A part adopted Episcopacy; and five or six eventually became Quakers. Before this division, and while this company were at the height of their fanaticism; Ferris, whose family, including himself, had been deeply tinged with these things, went to college.* There he professed to be guided in all things by the illumination of the Spirit, and to be free from sin. Such was his appearance of devotion, as to draw almost into an adoption of his views some, who eventually became burning and shining lights in the Church. And though he departed from college without a degree, he left the outlines of his fanaticism distinctly engraven on Timothy Allen and James Davenport. The former was ordained as pastor of the church in West Haven, where, under the notion of receiving ideas from God without the use of words, he "*publicly said, that the word of God, as contained in the Old and New Testaments, is but as an old almanac; for which, and various other crimes, he was deposed by the Consociation.*" But the career of Davenport was not soon arrested. By him the views derived from Ferris were driven like a tornado through the churches, denouncing ministers, resisting genuine revivals, inculcating the reception of "ideas without the use of words," inflating his disciples with the notion, that they were holier than others, and thus inducing them to abandon the churches and to be separate, till he brought the work of the Spirit into such reproach, that nearly a whole generation passed away before the churches generally could be brought candidly to hear the name of a revival.

About the year 1792, revivals began again to be extensive and powerful. Within a few years of this time sixty congregations in one small section of the country were visited with a rain of righteousness.† During thirty-five years these manifestations of divine power continued to become more frequent and extensive. So uniformly blessed were their efforts, as to awaken earnest desires in the hearts of Christians, and call forth their fervent prayers. Almost a whole nation had begun to respect them, and to regard them as immensely valuable. During a few of the last years in this period, the Rev. John Truair, a man without public ed-

* See Printed Letter of the Rev. Daniel Boardman, New Milford, Nov. 16th, 1742.

† Dr. Griffin's Sermon at the dedication of the Chapel in William's College.

ucation, partially borrowed from another denomination a system of measures, and began to inculcate the new views of faith in respect to prayer, as specially important to the production of revivals. Owing to the estimation in which revivals were held, and the anxiety to promote them, these views circulated with amazing rapidity. The doctrine was then inculcated by some, who would now blush to own it, that a church might have a revival whenever it chose.* Instead of regarding it solely as a sovereign work of the Almighty, it was represented as suspended remotely, not on the "good pleasure of his will," but on the faith of his people. Christians were taught, that "they must pray for the conversion of a sinner, believing that he would be converted, and it would be done. At the close of public meetings, they were told, "go home, and retire to your closets, and take one of these sinners on your heart, and pray that he may be converted, believing that he will be converted, and he will be converted; and if you do not do it, you are answerable for that soul." It was inculcated, that when we do those things that are pleasing to God, we shall receive whatsoever we ask of him. Thus the Almighty was represented as bound by promise to do whatever the erring children of men shall dictate. When it was urged that "we are not omniscient, and are liable to ask for things which are not for the best," it was replied, "that the Holy Ghost is omniscient, and does know what is for the best," and that he "indites every such prayer." Thus the doctrine of the immediate and universal teaching (*in effect the inspiration*) of all Christians by the Holy Ghost in respect to prayer, was adopted and inculcated. It was also maintained, that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and that in answer to it the Lord will raise him up; and that, if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him; and that the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man may avail as much in us, as it did in Elias." It was professed before the world, that if to believe this is to believe in working miracles, "*common Christians now can perform miracles*, for they can pray the effectual fervent prayer." It was strongly intimated, that the notable gifts mentioned in 1 Cor. 10: 2, are still in the Church, and

* It does not sufficiently appear, whether Mr. Truair was the first in this century who inculcated the preceding views. It is not improbable that the palm may yet be awarded to one in the interior of the country, far older and more distinguished in the ministry.

that nothing but faith is requisite to their exercise.* Over the fields where Truair had recently sown the seeds, the Rev. J. Burchard soon passed, whose subsequent labours in the vicinity are said to have brought forth the Rev. C. G. Finney. He came denying the *depravity of man by nature*, attributing conversion to *four different agencies*, inculcating that the Holy Ghost carries on *debates and argumentation* with the sinner, and communicates *ideas* of duty to his people *without the use of words*. These doctrines, with a corresponding system of measures, were driven like a hurricane through the churches. To resist this operation was to resist God. Conscientious Christians gave place, till they should see what it was. Timorous ones were attached to his triumphal car, while the bold and the ignorant seized the reins and the whip; and hundreds and thousands under these various influences, were led to believe themselves converted, and were immediately driven into the church. These scenes were called *revivals*; and thus the very name of the operations of divine grace was brought into suspicion. Many of his spiritual progeny, under the abilities of his system, and the several influences which acted upon them, soon manifested their fatherhood! and declared themselves to be perfect. His system itself, so long a mystery, has in these* volumes come forth before all, and is seen to be the doctrines of Pelagius, slightly modified, and practically carried out into all the elements of a lawless perfectionism. Is this Mr. Finney? Is it true, that he now inculcates perfectionism? Is he now engaged in using "one of the devil's mas-

* If any one desires more fully to understand the nature of these views, or to trace their legitimate consequences, he is referred to a letter from New Haven, Conn., published in the New-York Christian Herald, in the latter part of 1821.—To an article, signed Alpha, in the Utica Evangelical Recorder, of Sept. 1821—containing remarks on the New Haven Letter.—A reply to Alpha, in the Utica Christian Repository, Jan. 1822; inserted also in the New-York Christian Herald, of Jan. 19th, 1822, signed L. F. (written by Mr. Truair.) In the Repository of Feb., Alpha replied to L. F., and in June L. F. wrote again, to which Alpha rejoined; and the controversy with Mr. Truair ended. The articles of Alpha are regarded by sound divines, as a triumphant refutation of this error.

† We look upon the course of Mr. Finney as peculiarly instructive. He of all others has taught the New-Haven theology in its greatest purity and has ventured to push its principles to their legitimate results. Those parts of New-York which have been the scene of his labours, are giving, and will long continue to give the most instructive lessons as to the nature of that system of doctrine, and its influence on individual character and religious institutions.—Ed.

ter-pieces to counteract a revival?" Is this the man, who, during twelve years has been receiving the adulations of a numerous retinue in the Church? Is it to be for ever recorded, that the great body of his converts are a disgrace to religion? Is his system to be for ever denominated Pelagianism, carried out into a burning fanaticism? And is he henceforth to take rank with Davenport, or perhaps with some other more fiery and destructive comet in the Church?

Mr. Finney has in these volumes gone to the ultimate boundary of religious error. The whole region beyond him is infidelity. Some of those who had arrived where he now is, stopped, wondered, and returned. Others, believing themselves to receive "*ideas from God without the use of words,*" advanced till they rejected the written oracles of truth, and the ordinances of Christ. Can this system leave Mr. Finney where he now is? Or will it compel him to take one step more? Or will he yet, by grace, be enabled to abandon it? In these inquiries, some portions of our country have a weighty concern. Through the members of his Institute, these views will soon be claiming a general admission to the pulpits, and an extensive hearing by the Church. Like the evils of the fabled box, they are soon to break forth, and more widely to infest the heritage of the Lord. If they are not immediately checked, it is impossible to calculate the boldness to which they may attain, or the mischiefs which they may do; for Mr. Flavel says, "errours in the tender bud, and first spring of them, are comparatively shy and modest, to what they prove afterwards, when they have spread and rooted themselves into the minds of multitudes, and think it time to set up and jostle for themselves in the world."

ART. III. REVIEW OF DR. JOHNSON'S LIVES OF THE POETS.

By DANIEL DANA, D. D., Newburyport, Mass.

FEW men of any age, have held a more distinguished rank in the Republic of Letters, than Dr. Johnson. There was, indeed, a period when, in Great Britain, the literary republic seemed to be converted into a *monarchy*; and Johnson reigned with a kind of absolute and undisputed sovereignty. The almost unparalleled ascendancy which he acquired, and for many years retained, is a phenomenon which has never yet received a perfect explanation. That he possessed a mind of great native strength, which he nourished with abundant and various reading, and invigorated by deep and discriminating thought, is universally admitted. That the superiority of such a mind over the great mass of mind, should be extensively felt and acknowledged, is nowise surprising. But the claims of Johnson did not stop here; nor did his success. He was an object of admiration with those who were themselves admired; and many who were capable of prescribing opinions to others were content to receive law from him. His literary decisions and criticisms commanded a general, if not a universal homage. The tribute might be sometimes extorted; but it was still paid. If, in the wide-spread chorus, a few discordant sounds were heard, they were too feeble to make impression, or were overpowered by the general voice.

This singular pre-eminence of Johnson has been strongly, and not infelicitously described by a poet of our own country.*

"Just, yet despotic, deck'd with awful rays,
O'er the vast realm of wit, proud Johnson sways.
His will the law, his dictates absolute;
Nor dares the haughtiest slave his nod dispute.
Stern monarch! tho' thy greatness all revere,
Old time at last, shall pluck thee from thy sphere,
No throne can e'er be stable, built on *fear*."

The suggestion that the throne of Johnson was built on

* JONATHAN M. SEWALL, of Portsmouth, N. H.

fear, has some foundation in truth ; for he swayed an iron sceptre over most within his reach ; and to question his supremacy, was generally to incur his wrath. Nor has the prediction of our poet been wholly unfulfilled. Time, which has brightened and extended the fame of a few distinguished writers, has performed, in the case of Johnson, a somewhat dissimilar operation. While to his writings has generally been conceded, even at the present day, the praise of erudition, power and depth of thought, vigour of expression, and good moral tendency, those writings find comparatively few readers. His Dictionary, indeed, is still highly and deservedly valued ; and this chiefly, for the felicity and nice discrimination of its definitions.

There is, however, one work of Johnson, which few general readers fail to peruse ; and which, though according to their variety of tastes and prepossessions, variously estimated, all must acknowledge to hold a distinguished place in English literature. I refer to his *Lives of the most eminent English Poets*, accompanied with *Critical Observations on their works*. One of the remarkable circumstances attending this production is, that, though written about the age of seventy, it exhibits the author's mind in the full possession of all its powers. This work will be made the subject of a few remarks. A complete analysis of its contents, or an accurate estimate of its general character, is no part of my design. Such an attempt would, in the writer, be presumption, and could terminate only in failure. I shall offer some observations on the prominent excellencies and defects of this distinguished production. Adverting afterwards, to some of the principal poets introduced, I shall hazard some remarks on the degree of justice which has been done them.

It is no small praise of the work to say, as may be said with justice, that its moral aspects and tendencies are generally good. Respecting the piety of Johnson, there has been some diversity of opinion. In the view of his unshaken faith in Divine Revelation, and the general regularity of his life, some have deemed his piety unquestionable. While others, discerning considerable obliquities, both in his temper and deportment, have at least doubted on this point. He certainly had enough of religious faith to make him very unhappy ; for few have had such terrific apprehensions of death, as he seems habitually to have cherished. There is likewise considerable reason to believe that, in his last sick-

ness, his religious views were greatly improved; and that he died in the peace and hope of the humble, confiding Christian. Nor is it less true, that whatever irregularities marked his life, he uniformly treated religion with reverence. He never trifled with its truths, nor with the great and sacred principles of morality. It is declared, indeed, by Boswell, that "from a spirit of contradiction, and a delight in showing his powers, he would often" (in conversation) "maintain the wrong side with equal warmth and ingenuity; so that when there was an audience, his real opinions could seldom be gathered from his talk." The practice was utterly indefensible. Yet, as the biographer justly adds, "he was too conscientious to make error permanent and pernicious, by deliberately *writing* it; and in all his numerous works, he earnestly inculcated what appeared to him to be the truth."

The Lives of the Poets afford, in many parts, a specimen of truly *philosophical* biography. Facts are not nakedly detailed, but exhibited in their principles, their bearings, their character, and their issues. Incidents give rise to moral instruction. Virtues and vices in character, minister to the reader's counsel and warning. Beauties and defects in writing, elicit occasionally, a profound philosophical remark, or an instructive disquisition.

The account introduced into the Life of Cowley, of the *metaphysical poets*, a class that appeared about the beginning of the seventeenth century, is a fine specimen of Johnson's philosophical accuracy and discrimination. While he does justice to their learning, their wit, and their occasional gleams of genius, he portrays with a masterly hand, their false conceits, their waste of intellect and labour, their heartlessness, and their extravagance.

In a work embracing critical observations on the most eminent English poets, the reader naturally expects to find the grand and leading *principles* of criticism elicited and illustrated. Nor is his expectation disappointed. The author's extensive and accurate acquaintance with the ancient classics, and with the best writers of modern times, together with his own strong perceptions and discriminating judgement, furnish a vast amount of critical information.

Indeed, the general knowledge of men and things, communicated in these volumes; and especially the knowledge of the English poets and literati, for nearly two centuries, is

of great value. Johnson's own literary and public life was unusually protracted. His acquaintance with the learned men of his time was extensive. His curiosity was active and insatiable; his observation keen; his memory retentive. His researches into the literature and literary men of preceding times, were unwearied; and his access to the best sources of information easy. Under these advantages, the accumulations of fifty years must have been rich and various. And they are spread out in no stinted measure, in the volumes before us. Especially does the work contain a variety of those minor occurrences in life, and those nicer shades of temper, which, though prone to escape common observation, constitute, in fact, not only the chief instruction and entertainment of the reader, but the surest key to the characters delineated.

It may be added, that in point of *style*, the work before us is one of the most excellent of all the author's productions. We have here few of those far-fetched and sonorous words, and little of that balancing of sentences, and rounding of periods, which characterize most of his other works. We have the man of sound common sense, who can tell us every day occurrences in a plain, yet accurate and elegant style. It can scarcely be denied that the style in which Johnson usually wrote, as it raised up a multitude of imitators, has done something to corrupt the simplicity of the language. Its stateliness and inflation are, at times, even disgusting. Many authors of considerable reputation, would doubtless have written better, if they had never perused a page of his writings. Among these must be reckoned the celebrated and excellent Mrs. Hannah More. How desirable is it, that as Johnson lived to see his error, and in some measure to discard it, those who are ambitious to make him their model, should fasten, not on his faults, but his reformation. It is, however, the usual fate of imitators to copy rather the defects than the excellencies of their models.

Having glanced at some of the leading excellencies of the work under consideration, we have before us the less pleasant task of noting some of its principal defects.

There is scarcely a greater *desideratum* in a biographer, or a critic, than the entire absence of prejudice and prepossession. In other words, we wish the mind of such an one to be like the calm surface of the lake, which gives a perfect reflection of the over-canopying heavens, and surrounding

scenery. Here, the most partial friends of Johnson must acknowledge him to have been deficient. Rarely has there existed so great a mind, so amply stored with prejudices. Such was his bigotry as a monarchist, that the very name of liberty seems not unfrequently to have disgusted him. He was once in a company in which a tragedy was read, containing this line :

"Who rules our freemen should himself be free."

The company admired the sentiment. But Johnson dissented ; declaring that the poet might with equal propriety have written,

"Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat."

Nor was he less bigoted in his attachment to the very highest style of Episcopacy. At the close of his *Life of Dr. Watts*, he pronounces the reader happy who should "imitate him in all but his *non-conformity* ;" as if non-conformity were some grievous sin which even in an eminently good man ought not to pass without at least an indirect reproof ; and against which the reader must in faithfulness be warned.

As to the liberty of the press, he admits that there is danger in restraining it ; but seems to think that there is decidedly greater danger in leaving it unshackled. "If," says he, "every murmurer at government may diffuse discontent, there can be no peace ; and if every sceptic in theology may teach his follies, there can be no religion." On the whole, he comes to the grave conclusion, that "it seems not more reasonable to leave the right of printing unrestrained, because writers may be afterwards censured, than it would be to sleep with our doors unbolted, because by our laws we can hang a thief."

These prejudices of Johnson it seemed needful to notice, not only as they were deeply ingrained in his mind, but obviously influenced his views of no small number of the English poets, and gave a tinge to his estimate, not only of their characters, but their writings.

The same may be said of his prejudice against blank verse ; a prejudice which, as it rarely forsook him, must have been unfavourable to a correct judgement in regard to a most important portion of English poetry.

Another circumstance must have been still more disqual-

ifying. He had no very keen relish for the beauties of nature. His favourite pleasures were found in books, in company, and it must be added, in the delights and luxuries of London. "When a man," said he, "is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford." This is not the language of one whom "Nature's works can charm;" of one who drinks at that exhaustless fountain of beauty and grandeur which her ever-varying scenes supply. It is here that the genuine poet has ever delighted to revel. Nor may a poet of this character expect to find full justice, but from a critic of congenial character and taste.

It is well known to have been the opinion of Johnson, that religion is a subject unadapted to poetry. Of "devotional poetry," he remarks, in his *Life of Watts*, that "the paucity of its topics enforces perpetual repetition, and the sanctity of its matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction." In his *Life of Waller*, he labours the point more at large, and by a somewhat formidable array of argument. The conclusion at which he finally arrives, is that neither penitence nor faith, nor supplication, nor even thanksgiving can be poetical; and that "all which pious men can do, is to help the memory, and delight the ear." But his reasoning is somewhat too abstruse for comprehension, and too refined for use. Indeed, there is one objection, at least, against the doctrine, and that is, *that it is not true*. Who that has read the Sacred Volume does not know, that while its poetry has a beauty and sublimity utterly unparalleled, the most beautiful and sublime of its poetry is often strictly devotional? And who will deny that the Christan Revelation abounds with truths and disclosures which, while they fill and enlarge the understanding, summon the passions, too, to their intensest exercise, and invite the imagination to its loftiest flights?

One of the most exceptionable points in the work before us, is the spirit of *severity* which pervades both its biography, and its criticism. And as severity is a contagious quality, there is doubtless some danger lest, in our description and reprehension, we should do more than justice to this part of the subject. It will, however, be our effort,

"Naught to extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice."

To a benevolent mind, that surveys the literature of the world, it is a most painful reflection, that, of the multitude of writers who, in every age, have recommended virtue, few, comparatively, have been models of the virtue they recommended. It must likewise be confessed, that here the poets of almost every nation, and the most eminent poets, have signally failed. Perhaps it cannot be denied that the poetical temperament itself is, in some respects, unfavourable to virtue. The strength and splendour of imagination which are necessary to make a good poet, have not always made a good man; and have sometimes even burst away from the restraints of goodness, and the duties of a virtuous life. No doubt, many a fine writer has mistaken the *praise* of virtue for its love, and its practice. The very strains which have warmed and purified other hearts, have left their own still cold, and still impure. In looking over the catalogue of English poets, we find comparatively few characters of eminent goodness, many of doubtful virtue, and not a few, stained with vice. In recording the lives of such men, the conscientious biographer must frequently use the language of qualified approbation, and frequently that of unqualified censure. Our complaint of Johnson, then, is not that he frequently blames, but that blame is apparently his favourite element; not that he often reproves, but that his reproof so often converts to reproach, not to say, reprobation. Were his censures the effusions of a mind that could pity, while it reproves; were they even the apparent outbreaks of the indignation which virtue feels towards vice, they would merit for him nothing but honour. But so much leaning, in doubtful cases, to the unfavourable side; so much shrewdness in detecting faults; so much readiness to display and to magnify them; so much keen satire and cold blooded sarcasm; with a proportionate parsimony in bestowing praise, even where praise is plainly merited—these are blemishes which not only mar the pleasure of perusing a great work, but materially obstruct its best moral effect.

The remarks we have made on the biography of the work, apply with nearly equal force to its criticism. It would have been delightful to find, in the lucubrations of a mind so powerful and discriminating, the genuine principle of criticism not only announced and illustrated, but judiciously and candidly applied. Thus the merits, absolute and comparative, of the great body of English poets, should have

been fairly brought to the test. The meretricious splendour of some would have vanished. The unnoticed merit of others would have been placed in open day. Candid readers would have willingly submitted their judgements to such a standard; and if constrained to resign some favourite opinions, would have been more than compensated in finding their views and taste in other cases, sanctioned by unquestionable principles. But such a system of judicious, fair, impartial criticism, in reference to the English poets, is yet a *desideratum*. Johnson, with all his acknowledged talents and learning, has not furnished it. The reader who looks to him for a candid, unbiassed estimate of the poets at large, will be sadly disappointed. The reader who receives his decisions with any portion of that confidence which it is natural to repose in a high authority, will be frequently and greatly misled. Johnson's opinions (or *decrees*, as they may be styled,) are frequently capricious and partial; and frequently stamped with great severity; though it is admitted there are some striking and honourable exceptions.

But let us quit the field of general remark, and come to some particulars. We will begin with the Life of MILTON, the greatest of English poets: but chargeable with the double guilt of dissent from the established church, and of republicanism. Of course, he was not likely to find much favour in the eyes of Johnson. Indeed, he is attacked by him in terms of almost unmeasured reproach. He is declared to have adopted "the *puritanical savageness* of manners." He is charged (though apparently on no other ground than suspicion) with the crime of *interpolating* a book which he was employed by the Council of State to censure. And this *suspected crime* is gravely exhibited as a proof that "faction seldom leaves a man honest, however it might find him." Elsewhere, referring to Milton's having been Latin Secretary to Cromwell, Johnson states that, "having now tasted the honey of public employment, he would not return to hunger and philosophy, but continuing to exercise his office under a manifest usurpation, betrayed to his power that liberty which he had defended." Johnson adds, with great acrimony: "Nothing can be more just than that rebellion should end in slavery; that he who had justified the murder of his king, for some acts which to him seemed unlawful, should now sell his services, and his flat-

teries to a tyrant, of whom it was evident that he could do nothing lawful."

One quotation farther of this kind will be more than sufficient. Speaking of the latter part of Milton's life, Johnson remarks: "No sooner is he safe, than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues*, and *with darkness and with danger compassed round*. This darkness," adds the biographer, "had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion; but to add the mention of danger, was ungrateful and unjust. He was fallen, indeed, on *evil days*; the time was come in which regicides could no longer boast their wickedness. But of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain, required impudence at least equal to his other powers; Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow that he never spared any asperity of reproach, or brutality of insolence."

It is at once a relief and delight, to turn from these unjust and indecent liberties taken by Johnson with Milton's character, to his treatment of his genius and writings. On these points, he is more liberal than usual, of his praise; and seems almost to redeem his former severity. Of *Comus*, he remarks that it exhibits the author's "power of description, and his vigour of sentiment, employed in the praise and defence of virtue." He adds; "A work more truly poetical is rarely found; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets embellish almost every period with lavish decoration. As a series of lines, therefore, it may be considered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it."

His praise of *Paradise Lost* is equally worthy of the critic and the poet. "The thoughts," he says, "are such as could only be produced by an imagination in the highest degree fervid and active, to which materials were supplied by incessant study and unlimited curiosity. The heat of Milton's mind might be said to sublimate his learning, to throw off into his work the spirit of science, unmingled with its grosser parts.

"He had considered creation in its whole extent, and his descriptions are therefore learned. He had accustomed his imagination to overstrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore, were extensive. The characteristic quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant,

but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace; but his natural port is gigantic loftiness. He can please when pleasure is required; but it is his peculiar power to astonish."

He adds; "He seems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others; the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful; he therefore chose a subject on which too much could not be said; on which he might tire his fancy without the censure of extravagance. . . . He sent his faculties out upon discovery into worlds where only imagination could travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superiour beings; to trace the counsels of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven."

And afterwards; "Of his moral sentiments, it is hardly praise to affirm that they excel those of all other poets; for this superiority he was indebted to his acquaintance with the sacred writings. . . . Every line breathes sanctity of thought, and purity of manners, except when the train of the narrative requires the introduction of rebellious spirits; and even they are compelled to acknowledge their subjection to God in such a manner as excites reverence, and confirms piety."

Having caught the critic in a good-humoured frame, we will indulge ourselves with one more specimen. It relates to Milton's feelings and anticipations with respect to the success of his great work; and is conceived and expressed in Johnson's best manner. "Fancy can hardly forbear," says he, "to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked its reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting, without impatience, the vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation."

The Life of DRYDEN is written with Johnson's usual sagacity, and with something more than his usual care and labour. He does justice to the poet's uncommon powers, and treats his eccentricities and faults with as much lenity

as could be desired. Respecting his conversion to popery soon after the accession of King James, Johnson remarks ; "It is natural to hope that a comprehensive is likewise an elevated soul, and that whoever is wise, is also honest. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different studies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controversy, and wanted rather skill to discover the right, than virtue to maintain it. But inquiries into the heart are not for man ; we must leave him to his judge."

Of the writings of Dryden, Johnson remarks, with too much justice, that they "exhibit many passages which, with all the allowances that can be made for characters and occasions, are such as piety would not have admitted, and such as may vitiate light and unprincipled minds."

Dryden's impurities are noted and reproved in a style not unworthy of the great English moralist. "Of the mind," says he, "that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness, for the sake of spreading the contagion in society, I wish not to conceal or excuse the depravity. Such degradation of the dignity of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation."

Johnson's general estimate of Dryden's powers and acquisitions, may be collected from the following remarks ; "His works abound with knowledge, and sparkle with illustration. There is scarcely any science or faculty that does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes ; every page discovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full possession of great stores of intellectual wealth. . . . Yet I rather believe that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and various conversation, by a quick apprehension, a judicious selection, and a happy memory, a keen appetite of knowledge, and a powerful digestion ; by vigilance that permitted nothing to pass without notice, and a habit of reflection that suffered nothing useful to be lost."

Dryden was one of the most admired poets of his time. He wrote much ; yet as the interest of most of his poetry was altogether local and temporary, his writings are now generally forgotten, or neglected. Nor would any friend of virtue wish to see them again brought into notice and use. Yet amidst the corruption and rubbish of his writings,

there is a description of *human life*, which has rarely been exceeded, or even equalled, by any other poet. It is as graphic as it is just :

“ When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat ;
Yet, fool'd by hope, men favour the deceit,
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay ;
To-morrow's falser than the former day ;
Lies more ; and while it says we shall be blest
With some new joy, cuts off what we possess.
Strange cozenage ! None would live past years again ;
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain,
And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.
I'm tired of waiting for this chymic gold,
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.”

Johnson's *Life of SAVAGE* must be ranked among the curiosities of English literature. That the biography of a man so dissipated and licentious ; a man convicted of murder, though pardoned, should occupy so ample a space—more than six times as large as is occupied by the *Life of Thompson*—appears at first view surprising. The circumstance is explained by the fact that it was composed by Johnson early in life, as a separate work, and inserted in the present work as originally written. Still the affair is not wholly divested of its mystery. That *Savage* was of noble, though illegitimate birth, is confessed. This fact has, indeed, been brought into question. Still, when it is considered that, during the life of his reputed mother, there were published three different accounts of *Savage*, in all of which her impurity, and her cruelty to her son, were exposed to the world, and this, without contradiction or animadversion, the question would seem to be set at rest. That *Savage* had a portion of genius, is likewise admitted. But his life was at war with every principle of regularity and virtue. He was the slave of appetite and passion. Johnson himself admits that he was a pensioner on the bounty of his friends, without either humility or gratitude ; that he expended in taverns, sums which he received as subscriptions for works which he never prepared ; that he alternately praised and lampooned the same characters ; and that when provoked, even by small offences, he would prosecute his revenge with the utmost acrimony, till his passion had subsided. How so severe a moralist as Johnson has been viewed, should think time and labour well bestowed in giv-

ing celebrity, or at least notoriety, to a character of this cast, is a problem not easily solved. There is a circumstance, indeed, which throws some light on the subject. Johnson and Savage were, for a time, on terms of mutual intimacy. Boswell states that there were occasions on which they wandered together, whole nights, through the streets of London. With all his extravagant partialities for Johnson, he admits, that as Savage was a licentious man, his companion did not preserve himself wholly pure. But these are scenes over which benevolence would wish to drop the veil of oblivion. If, in narrating the life of his former companion and friend, Johnson has partially merged in concealment some of his most odious vices; if, in other cases, he has insinuated apologies for faults too egregious to be excused, let it be remembered that such offences are, on his part, extremely rare. And let it be remembered, that he has closed the biography of this most eccentric man with the following sound and salutary reflection. "This relation will not be wholly without its use, if those who languish under any part of his sufferings, shall be enabled to fortify their patience by reflecting that they feel only those afflictions from which the abilities of Savage did not exempt him; or those who, in confidence of superiour capacities or attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, shall be reminded that nothing will supply the want of prudence; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible."

Our remarks on the Life of SWIFT shall be extremely brief. When, in travelling, we are met with a spot on which "no salutary plant takes root, no verdure quickens," and which is perhaps overgrown with brambles, we enter on it with reluctance, and leave it with all practicable rapidity. Swift was one of those remarkable characters which, though they make much show and bustle while they live, are but little regretted when they die. If, as some contend, he had an iron intellect, the same material was still more visible in the composition of his *heart*. His unparalleled and almost savage treatment of two estimable and lovely women, harrowed up their sensibilities, and shortened their days. Johnson has given his character justly and briefly in the following sentences: "He was not a man to be either loved or envied. He seems to have wasted life in discon-

tent, by the rage of neglected pride, and the languishment of unsatisfied desire. He is querulous and fastidious, arrogant and malignant; he scarcely speaks of himself, but with indignant lamentation, or of others but with indignant superiority when he is gay, and with angry contempt when he is gloomy. From the letters that pass between him and Pope, it might be inferred that they, with Arbuthnot and Gay, had engrossed all the understanding and virtue of mankind; that their merits had filled the world, or that there was no hope of more."

Of the poetical works of Swift, Johnson remarks: "To divide this collection into classes, and show how some pieces are gross, and some are trifling, would be to tell the reader what he knows already, and to find faults of which the author could not be ignorant, who certainly wrote often, not to his judgement, but his humour."

I will add, without fear, on my own responsibility, that if a large portion of the poetry of Swift, or rather his rhymes, had, with the other sweepings of his study, found its way to the region of everlasting forgetfulness, the world would have been no loser, nor would his own reputation have been less unsullied. When men write "not to their judgement, but their humour," the public may well be spared the infliction of their eccentricities, and their follies.

We now come to the Life of POPE. On this ample field, it might naturally have been expected that Johnson would bestow much labour, and that his powers, both of biography and criticism, would be displayed to no common advantage. Nor is the expectation altogether disappointed.

Pope may be said almost to have commenced a new era in English poetry. It is true that Dryden, a great reformer, had preceded him. But if Dryden began a reformation, it was Pope who, entering his school, and uniformly acknowledging his obligations to his master, made that reformation perfect. Under his hand, English verse assumed a harmony, and a finish, and the English language a precision, a force and beauty, unknown before. Nor will it be denied, that he possessed a power of conception, and a felicity of expression, which are not exceeded in any writer of ancient or modern times, and which have no parallel, but in the classic authors of Greece and Rome. Johnson once remarked in conversation, "a thousand years may elapse before there shall appear another man with a power of ver-

sification equal to that of Pope." And Dr. Watts has said that "there is scarcely a happy combination of words, or a phrase poetically elegant in the English language, which Pope has not inserted in his version of Homer."

In detailing the incidents of Pope's life, Johnson has availed himself of the ample materials which lay within his reach. In delineating his character, he has generally done justice to his virtues, and has never failed to do justice to his faults.

Pope's natural disposition, it should seem, was not unamiable. But the almost unbounded admiration with which his works were received by the public, together with the attention lavished on him by the great and noble, did not improve his character. Of all the causes which corrupt the human mind, flattery is one of the most powerful. A long series of slender health seems to have rendered him fretful. While the occasional attacks of contemporary authors, some of whom he had wantonly provoked, exasperated his spirit, and embittered his closing years. The *Dunciad*, if it was a monument of the power of his genius, declared still more unequivocally, the strength, not to say, the malignity of his passions.

One virtue he is generally allowed to have possessed; a most tender and endeared attachment to those who gave him birth. His affection for an aged mother, he has expressed in lines of surpassing beauty—lines which indicate not only a mind familiar with the elegant and the tender, but a heart "tremblingly alive" with sensibility.

"Me let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing age.
With lenient acts extend a mother's breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death;
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep awhile one parent from the sky."

Johnson's remarks upon Pope's letters, possess an originality, and perhaps a justice, which gives them a claim to be repeated. "Of his social qualities," he says, "if an estimate be made from his letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed. They exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence, and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness." He adds: "It has been so long said, as to be

commonly believed, that the true character of men may be found in their letters; and that he who writes to his friend, lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the golden age, and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, . . . and certainly, what we hide from ourselves, we do not show to our friends. . . . A friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance; and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character. . . . The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed, they are felt; and self-love does not suspect the gleams of virtue to be the meteors of fancy."

Johnson's estimate of Pope's writings exhibits, in some parts, more than his usual candour; in others, the full measure of his usual severity. Of his *Essay on Criticism*, he remarks, that "if he had written nothing else, the world would have placed him among the first critics, and the first poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactic composition; selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression."

Of the *Essay on Man*, he declares: "This essay affords an egregious instance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised. The reader feels his mind full, though he learns nothing; and when he meets it, in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother and his nurse."

This judgement is doubtless too severe. There is proof, indeed, that in the production of the *Essay on Man*, Pope was engaged in a kind of literary copartnership with the infidel Lord Bolingbroke. Dr. Warton, in his *Essay on the genius and writings of Pope*, declares that Lord Bathurst repeatedly assured him that he had read the whole scheme of the *Essay on Man*, in the hand-writing of Bolingbroke, and drawn up in a series of propositions which Pope

was to versify and illustrate. Still, it is equally true, that Pope was duped in the matter by Bolingbroke, who concealed from him his real sentiments, and led him, in the dark, to inculcate principles scarcely consistent with Christianity. This is evident from the fact, that when Bishop Warburton came forth and defended the Essay from the charge of inculcating fatalism, and rejecting revelation, Pope wrote him a letter of thanks; assuring him that he had meant just what Warburton had explained, though he had not explained his meaning so well as the bishop had done.

Though, therefore, this celebrated Essay has been much a favourite with infidels, we are not disposed to resign it to their hands. If many things in it are obscure, there are many, too, which are luminous and instructive. The very sentiments which have been sometimes pressed into the cause of infidelity, need but a little *baptizing*, to become sublime, practical Christian truths. If, for instance, the Essay seems occasionally to inculcate a species of *pantheism*, the good man who is in the daily habit of seeing and enjoying *God in all things*, and *all things in God*, can reject the poison, and luxuriate on the *residuum*, as so much nutritious and salutary food.

Pope's *Epitaphs* have been admired by most readers, as combining tenderness of thought with simplicity and elegance of expression. Johnson has employed a goodly number of pages in proof that they are vapid compositions; surcharged with faults, and destitute of almost every thing which epitaphs ought to contain. To a great portion of readers, however, his remarks will probably appear hypercritical and extravagant; and the epitaphs thus severely handled, will be read with much the same feelings as before.

THOMPSON is a poet of high rank. His *Seasons* alone are sufficient to stamp him as a great classical writer. In power and extent of thought, in beauty of language, in accuracy of observation, in vividness of description, in variety and richness of imagery, they have been rarely surpassed or equalled. Perhaps it may be said without extravagance, that while the seasons of Nature roll on, his description of them will not cease to be read with pleasure. Could the work be obliterated, or lost, a chasm would be made in English poetry which might never be supplied.

The admirers of Thompson, and they embrace a great portion of readers, will probably not consider him as having

received full justice at the hands of the great critic. And here, too, there was probably an operation of his tory principles. Thompson was an ardent advocate of *liberty*, and wrote a long poem in its praise, on which he congratulated himself as his noblest work. But, says the critic, rather ungraciously, "an author and his readers are not always of a mind. Liberty called in vain upon her votaries to read her praises, and reward her encomiast; her praises were condemned to harbour spiders, and to gather dust." Of the same poem, Johnson remarks afterward: "When it first appeared, I tried to read it, and soon desisted. I have never tried again, and therefore will not hazard either praise or censure." There is, in this remark, an egotism and arrogance which tempt one to exclaim with Burns,

"Oh, would some power the giftie gie us,
To see ourselves as others see us."

Elsewhere the critic is more candid. "As a writer," he says, "Thompson is entitled to one praise of the highest kind. His mode of thinking, and of expressing his thoughts, is original. His blank verse is no more the blank verse of Milton, or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of Cowley. His numbers, his pauses, his diction, are of his own growth, without transcription, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on nature and on life with the eye which nature bestows only on a poet, the eye that distinguishes in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained; and with a mind which at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute. The reader of the Seasons wonders that he never saw before what Thompson shows him, and that he never yet has felt what Thompson impresses."

He concludes his criticisms with a beautiful sentiment. "The highest praise which Thompson has received, ought not to be suppressed. It is said by Lord Lyttelton, that his works contained

'No line which, dying, he could wish to blot.'"

We have now arrived at the life of WATTS—a great and venerable name—a name dear to virtue, to piety, to sound learning, and the lovers of sacred verse. Johnson

speaks of him in terms of great respect; and how could he do otherwise? But enchained, as usual, by his unaccountable prejudice against sacred verse, he coldly remarks, that Watts's "devotional poetry is like that of others, unsatisfactory." "It is sufficient," he adds, "for Watts to have done better than others, what no man has done well." "He is at least one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased." Such faint and meagre praise would be absolutely unpardonable, were it not compensated in other passages, by encomiums equally liberal, judicious and discriminating. "Every man," says Johnson, "acquainted with the common principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer, who is at one time combating Locke, and at another, making a catechism for children in their fourth year. A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach."

Again: "As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works; under his direction it may be truly said, *Theologia Philosophiæ ancillatur*, philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at least, wishing to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction, and he that sat down only to reason, is on a sudden compelled to pray."

And again: "Few men have left behind such purity of character, or such monuments of laborious piety. He has provided instruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke; he has left neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the art of reasoning, and the science of the stars."

As COLLINS was a personal acquaintance of Johnson, we naturally expect some variety of detail respecting his interesting and eventful life. But we are disappointed. He who could expatiate with a wearisome, not to say disgusting particularity, on the eccentricities of Savage, could not devote five pages to one of the sweetest poets in the English language. Though, to most readers, the poems of Collins afford a rich and luxurious repast; though they are characterized equally by a brilliant and excursive imagination, and an exquisite taste, he finds but little favour with Johnson. His mind was cast in a different mould. And not relishing the beauties of Collins, and apparently unwilling that

they should be relished by others, he presents in his criticisms, a continued series of censures—censures which, in the taste and judgement of most readers, find no response. One touching anecdote, indeed, he relates on his personal knowledge. When Collins, who was sinking under a morbid melancholy, similar to that of Cowper, had withdrawn from study, and had commenced travelling, he was visited by Johnson, who finding that he had with him but a single book—an ordinary copy of the New Testament—and anxious to know what companion a man of letters had chosen, took it in his hand: “I have but one book,” said Collins, “*but that is the best.*”

The biography of Dr. Young was committed by Johnson to a friend, Mr. Herbert Croft. In the opinion of some readers, Mr. Croft has accomplished a somewhat successful imitation of the style of Johnson. But not so thought Edmund Burke. Being questioned on the subject; “No, no,” said he; “it is not a good imitation of Johnson. It has all his pomp, without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak, without its strength.” And setting his mind again at work, he added: “It has all the contortions of the sybil, without the inspiration.”

Of the poetry of Young, Johnson has given an account as candid and just as could be expected. He acknowledges some beauties, and detects many faults. Of his principal work, Johnson remarks; “In his *Night Thoughts*, he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions; a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue, and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme, but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of the imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by confinement to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness, but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole; and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantations, the magnificence of vast extent, and endless diversity.”

When, in conclusion, Johnson declares of Young, “with all his defects, he was a man of genius, and a poet,” he does but give expression to the judgement of every reader who is either candid or just.

Among the poets whose ardour in the praise of liberty has incurred the severity of Johnson, is AKENSIDE. That he was a man of genius, and a genuine poet, none will deny. His great work, *the Pleasures of the Imagination*, being seen by Pope in manuscript, he passed a handsome encomium on it, the author being unknown. Of the same work, Johnson speaks, as "an example of great felicity of genius, and uncommon amplitude of acquisitions; of a young mind stored with images, and much exercised in combining and comparing them." But he more than repays for this *modicum* of eulogy, by his severity on the lyric poetry of Akenside. "When he lays," says Johnson, "his ill-fated hand upon his harp, his former powers seem to desert him; he has no longer his luxuriance of expression, nor variety of images. His thoughts are cold, and his words inelegant."

We have room but for one poet more—GRAY; a man of genius and learning, and, though he wrote but little, a true poet. Johnson allows great merit (and how could he deny it, without impeaching his own understanding and taste?) to the *elegy written in a country church-yard*. But here his encomiums end. In his criticism on the rest of Gray's poetry, there is such obvious ill humour and superciliousness; such a determined inattention to beauties; such a keen detection and studious aggravation of faults, as amounts almost to persecution. In the whole, there is something unaccountable, unless Boswell has explained the mystery, by letting us know that Gray was one of those who did not bow to the superiority of Johnson, but rather dissented from the idolatrous homage which was so extensively paid him by the literary world. Could we for a moment suppose that it was this independence on the part of Gray, that brought down upon him the wrath of the great Critic, we should be constrained to exclaim, "Alas poor human nature!"

My design is now executed; but I am constrained to confess, most imperfectly. It has been with me a considerable object to vindicate the fame of some valued poets, and to rescue them from a censure, or a disregard which they seemed not to merit. If, while this point has been pursued, the Critic himself has been treated with some degree of severity, my apology must be found in the nature and necessity of the case.

On the whole, I have no reluctance to hazard the opinion,

that the work thus briefly reviewed, exhibits a combination of excellencies and defects, of wisdom and weakness, of sober judgement and caprice, of power of mind and power of prejudice—such as the world has rarely seen, and will not soon see again.

ART. IV. DEFECTS IN THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF THIS AGE.

BY REV. NICHOLAS MURRAY, Elizabethtown, N. J.

IN the religious and moral world, as in the astronomical, there are what may be called cycles, or circles of time, within whose limits the same events substantially recur. There is, for instance, an age of revolution, when old foundations are broken up—when holy and reverend error is discarded—and when, as with the violence of the tornado, the rubbish collected by the laborious industry of centuries, is scattered to the winds. This is usually followed by an age of calm consideration, when the elements of civil and social order are collected, arranged, and consolidated—when truth is selected from the great mass promiscuously piled together, and arranged according to its relations and importance. And this is again succeeded by an age of stirring enterprise, when great principles are carried out to their results.

Through a cycle like this the Church has passed within the last three hundred years, and the lines have fallen unto us within the last of these eras. The Reformation was the age of revolution, when the chains which ignorance forged, and which superstition riveted on the human mind, were broken. The considerate age was that which immediately succeeded it, and which continued onward to the close of the last century. It was an age of great renown, whose influence upon the Church and world will continue as long as either survive. Within it, the Westminster Assembly and the Synod of Dort, met and formed and published their almost inspired compends of Scriptural doctrine and Church order. Within it lived and wrote the brightest lights of the

Episcopal Church, in whose works the truth will live, even should that Church reject it. Within it lived and flourished the long and brilliant list of Puritan and Non-Conformist divines, who, after all is said, fought the battle of the reformation, and silenced the thunders of the Vatican, and placed high up beyond the reach of reasonable objection the doctrines of grace, and prevented the Church from settling down upon a foundation but a little less objectionable than that of the Roman Catholic from which it had been just removed. To this succeeded the age of stirring enterprise, which, commencing with the present century, has continued until now. Thus far it has been characterized by great and successful exertion in every department of benevolence. And the aggressive assaults of the Church on the empire of darkness have been so enthusiastic and successful as to induce many to believe that the empire of darkness is already subdued. Long may this age of action continue. But it is a delusion fatal to the triumphs of truth to think, amid the rejoicings over the capture of a small outpost of the enemy, that the entire army of the aliens is routed. Much remains to be done. The Church has no time for the languors of rejoicing, until the standard of the cross floats in triumph over the last strong hold of Satan in our world.

It is because human nature is prone to self-flattery, that we find the men of each succeeding age lauding their own at the expense of that which preceeded it. This is not just. It betrays both ignorance, and a biassed judgement. To exalt the considerate age above that of the reformation, is to exalt the effect at the expense of the cause. If there had been no Luther, there would have been no Owen, or Howe, or Charnock, or Flavel, or Henry. The same may be said of exalting the active above the considerate age. They stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect. And to exalt the one at the expense of the other, as is frequently done, is like exalting the active vegetation of summer at the expense of the glorious sun which produces it. For the zeal and enterprise of the present age we should be devoutly thankful; but we should be no less so for the calm reflection and sober inquiry of the preceding age. It is *that* which has given character to *this*. And *this*, is but using the well tempered weapons which that prepared for it. No person is heard praising the engineer of a steamboat, or the captain who commands her, at the expense of Watt or Fulton. Nor is

any person, amid the roar of the cannon and the constant volleys of musketry, heard praising the gunner and soldier at the expense of the discoverer of gunpowder. When we see the car of fire flying over the rails laid to guide it in its course, we think less about the engineer that conducts it than about the great genius that first contrived it. The battles which in this active age the Church has fought and won, she has fought clothed in the armour, and armed with the weapons formed to her hand by the great and good men of the preceding age. And as yet, at least, we must regard the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, next to the apostolic, as the golden age of the Church. With a certain class of men and mind, the *glorious nineteenth century* is so frequent a topic of eulogistic declamation, as to become not only common-place but disgusting. Surfeiting is one of the effects of profusion.

Each age has its characteristic virtues and defects. Of no age, as of no man, can it be said that it is in every respect what it should be. God is not lavish in the bestowal of his favours. And if the great and incessant conflicts of the reformation gave but too little opportunity for the cultivation of spiritual religion—if the deep and persevering study, the laborious research, the continued and necessary controversy of the reflective age, gave but too little time for crossing the lines of the Church, and carrying the lamp of life amid the millions that lay in darkness beyond them; this age of stirring enterprise and bustling activity has its defects. It has many and prominent virtues, but these are proclaimed from the house-top. And it has many and prominent defects. And unless these defects are remedied, as the eloquent Hall expresses it, the extension of the Church can only be compared to the extension which the body acquires by death.

A primary defect in the religious character of this age is, the neglect of family religion. Too much importance cannot be given to the divine arrangement of dividing the race into families. Upon that arrangement hang suspended the dearest and the highest interests of man. Nor can the family arrangement be molested, or its duties neglected, but at the risk of those interests. The good citizen, and the good subject, are made in the family. Hence, all civilized governments have bestowed the utmost care to strengthen, confirm, and protect the family arrangement. As a general rule, the moral, benevolent, and upright citizen is made in

the family. The Christian can only be made by God. No power less than that which created the world can restore to the heart the image effaced from it by sin. But who does not know that God has instituted family religion as a means to this end?

The effects of family instruction lie upon the surface of the field which opens out before us. The children of the heathen, are heathen—of papists, papists—and of infidels, infidels—and of the profane, profane. The law is, to which as to other general laws there are exceptions, that, as are the parents, so are the children. True, it is not as easy for the pious to make their children pious, as for the heathen and the profane to transmit their own character to their children; but yet the promise has some meaning, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

And churches and Christians, whose histories and examples are now before us, regarded this promise as emphatically true. What people ever instructed their children more carefully than did the Jews? and with what unyielding firmness each succeeding generation has clung to the religion of their fathers! And the example of the Presbyterians of Scotland is worthy of quotation here. They have never been excelled as to their attention to the duties which constitute family religion. And hence, the light of truth glowed upon their mountains, and illuminated their churches, when it had nearly retired from Europe besides. And their example was remembered and copied by the pilgrim strangers amid the wilds of New-England. And it was the cultivation of family religion, and its benign influence upon the minds and habits and character of her population, that have made New-England what she was, and what she is. Whatever may become of her in coming time; whatever may be her departures from the platforms of Cambridge and Saybrook, her past history is written, and it can never be forgotten.

Not many years since, family religion was very extensively cultivated throughout the Presbyterian church in this country. In nearly every family professedly pious, and in multitudes of others where no such profession was made, morning and evening prayer were offered—the children were taught from lisping infancy the catechisms, and to honour the institutions of religion, and to regulate their lives

by its rules and precepts. No doubt some of our readers will recollect when their fathers led them to the sanctuary on the Sabbath, and questioned them as to the text, and the sermon preached from it—when the close of the day of rest was spent in committing and reciting the catechisms—when a part of the evening of the Sabbath was spent in reading the Bible, and in hearing some brief comments on the portions read—in parental exhortations with the children to become reconciled to God, and in fervent prayer by the father, for spiritual blessings to rest upon his children from generation to generation. And these religious duties were but a little less protracted through the days of the week than on the Sabbath. Religion was not then as now, the business of one day in seven. It was the presiding, regulating, controlling spirit of the family to which all its arrangements were subservient, and which converted the family circle into a type of heaven.

And the effect of all this upon the rising generation was apparent. The children grew up moral, industrious, respectable, obedient to their parents. Multitudes of them were early collected into the Church, who transmitted to the succeeding age the same delightful example as to the right way of honouring God in the family. Under this arrangement the Church grew and prospered. Its members grew up in a knowledge of the doctrines of the Bible; and when religion was professed it was done intelligently. Every pious family was a nursery from which little trees were transplanted from year to year into the garden of the Lord. Family religion was an efficient means of grace.

Alas! we have but too much evidence that, in this bustling age, family religion is declining. Nor does the fault of its decline rest solely upon our families. The ministry, the fashion, and the institutions of the day have each to bear their share of it. It is thought that better and more rapid ways of doing good are discovered, and family religion is being laid aside for the purpose of making experiments. What is the state of things in reference to the great majority of our congregations? The Sabbath arrives, and the morning is filled up with necessary family duties, and in preparation for the sanctuary. After two services there in rapid succession, the people return home, and as soon as the children can be prepared, they are away to the Sabbath school. As soon as the school is dismissed, the evening prayer meet-

ing or lecture calls them together; and when this service is concluded, they return home more exhausted than on any other evening of the week. With a little variation this description will apply to the great majority of our congregations. One duty so rapidly follows upon another, that there is no time to prepare aright for any, or to digest what may be heard. And where is the time for family duties—for conversation with children—for instructing them in the Bible and catechisms? There is none. And those who permit a round of religious duties to drive out family religion from the Sabbath, will permit worldly duties to drive it out of the remaining days of the week. Thus it is falling into neglect. And this neglect is characteristic of this age. In the days of glorious revival and sterling piety in the parish of Richard Baxter, there were said to be four hundred families in the daily cultivation of family religion. And Kidderminster, like the fleece of Gideon, was wet with the dew of heaven, when nearly all England besides was as a parched desert. And may it not be owing to its prevalent neglect, or its imperfect performance, that in this age the ways of Zion are left to mourn to such an alarming degree?

Another of the defects of this age is the want of a solid Christian character. The evidences of this fact are written upon the walls and upon every gate of the Church.* We see them in that love of excitement, that fondness for novelty, which so extensively prevail. We see them in the increasing slight attachment to doctrine, and order, and reverend usages—in the rapidity and facility with which views of doctrine, and order, and policy are exchanged—in the growing aversion to doctrinal instruction, and in the restless impatience every where manifested of doing good in a steady and uniform course, and from day to day. Here and there among the older ministers and members of our churches we meet with individuals of solid character, well indoctrinated, well disciplined; with singleness of aim, and steadiness of purpose in its pursuit; and so firmly anchored as not to be blown about by every changing wind; but these are the remnants of a past generation. The foundations of their character were laid in an age materially differing from ours. And unless a change comes over the Church when these pass away, we are not soon to see their like again. But the causes which lead to this defect of character are worthy of all attention.

One of these causes is that on which we have already dwelt—the neglect of family religion. The good mechanic, the good scholar, the good professional man of any profession, is made in youth. If youth is neglected, there is a deficiency which never can be supplied. And such is the fact as to Christian character. Men may become pious in mid-life, or in the decline of life, but unless well instructed in youth, their Christian character will be defective. Truth is in order to godliness; and godliness is usually in the proportion of our knowledge of the truth. And every observant eye must see that the better children are instructed when young, the better Christians they make in riper years. With the commencement of the present age of action, family religion commenced its decline. And we are now reaping the fruit. The fanaticism and folly of the present day find their fuel and favourers almost exclusively among those professors of religion who received no religious instruction in their youth, and who have been collected into our churches during those great excitements which have done so much to corrupt and disgrace our beloved Zion.

Another of these causes is the neglect of proper reading. The time was, when the plainest Christian considered a few standard works on theology indispensable to the furnishing of his house, and when the pious father, if unable to give any other dowry to a married son or daughter, would furnish them with a Bible and a commentary, and a few standard volumes on practical religion. Nor did these works merely grace the sideboard, or show their gilded and polished backs from the mahogany book-case. They were read, and understood. They showed by their soiled pages and turned down leaves, by the strings and slips of paper that were scattered through them and hung out from their ends, that they were read. But a few years since, and Newton's works, and the Saints' Rest, and the Rise and Progress of Religion, and Allein's Alarm, and Boston's Fourfold State, and some of the works of Flavel and of the Erskines, and Edwards on the Affections, were as familiar as household words. Plain Christians were heard quoting them on every occasion. But these are now laid aside to be eaten by the moths, for light and flashy works on religious subjects, or for our yet more frothy and senseless Annuals. Go into our more fashionable religious families, and you will find their centre tables covered with Annuals, and "the recent

publications of popular authors," which have scarcely a sufficient weight of sense or sentiment to keep them from being blown out of the window. And even the profitable reading of these, if such a thing were possible, is driven out by the yet lighter and more ephemeral productions of the daily and weekly press, that come up into our houses like the frogs of Egypt. And, among multitudes, to such a degree has the distaste for religious books grown, that little else is read from year to year but those ill-digested and motley sheets called by a singular misnomer *religious newspapers*, many of which are the disgrace and the canker of the Church. These things being so, can we wonder that one of the defects of this age, is the want of a solid Christian character! As well might we expect to strengthen the body by gruel, and toast water, as to confirm and strengthen the Christian character by confining the mind to the popular reading of the present day.

* Another of these causes is an exorbitant love of hearing. In days now past, good people were satisfied with hearing two good sermons on the Sabbath, and with a lecture or prayer meeting through the week. In those days much of the Sabbath was spent in examining and applying the sermon heard, in meditation and self-examination, in reading the Scriptures and other religious books, and in the instruction of children and domestics. But now, people's ears have grown so large that nothing less than three sermons on the Sabbath, and a meeting of some kind every evening of the week, can fill them. And unless they hear their regular quantum of exciting preaching and exhortation, they think they are starving for the bread of life.

The evils of all this are numerous and various. They are not seen in a moment, nor do they all appear in a day or a year. To satisfy the love of hearing, the ministry is so constantly on the stretch in making new preparations, that but little time or thought can be given to any. Instead of going into the treasury and bringing out from its well stored apartments things new and old, they have merely time to pick up what first comes to hand, and to haste with it into the presence of God and his people. There is no time for deep and sound investigation—none for doctrinal discussion—none for bringing out in their convincing power the evidences of religion. And if occasionally is found a minister who attempts to gratify the love of hearing, and also to

appear always before his people like a good workman, fully prepared, he soon fails under the double pressure of much preaching and study, and either sinks into an early grave, or lives under the accumulating feebleness and complaints of premature old age. The effect upon the ministry of this exorbitant love of hearing, is to enfeeble their bodies and their minds—to break up habits of study and investigation—to make them exhorters instead of preachers, and mere retailers of incident and anecdote, instead of clear expounders and manful defenders of the great doctrines that cluster around the cross.

And the effect upon the piety of the ministry is but a little less disastrous. If there is a man in the parish that needs time for reflection, and self-examination, and fervent supplication, it is the minister. He is but a man, subject to all the besetting sins of his people. The laying on of the hands of the Presbytery conferred not upon him a stock of grace to meet all his wants, without replenishing or care. He needs to use every means for growing in grace, that is needed by the most feeble of his flock. But to meet the calls made upon him by his people, he has so much to do in the way of preparation, that he has too little time to attend to himself. And hence much of the feebleness of preparation, and much of that lack of deep seriousness which appear in the pulpits of the present age. And unless we are very careful, the instructions of the pulpit will become so diluted, weak and flippant, as to lose the strong influence it has hitherto exerted in moulding the mind and character of the world.

The effect of this love of hearing upon the people, is to engross the time, some of which might be better occupied—to prevent digestion and reflection—to confine all religion to mere hearing, and to beget careless, unprepared, and inattentive waiting upon God. They run to hear without any previous preparation; they become so accustomed to hearing, that all subjects are to them alike, and before the week is half over, they remember neither the text, doctrine, or discussion. Their memory is worn so smooth, that nothing sticks to it but some odd expression, or some queer anecdote, or some low and vulgar illustration. When we consider attentively the operation of all these causes, is it wonderful that the religious character of this age is defective as to solidity, strength, and steadfastness?

Another of the defects of this age, is a forgetfulness of individual responsibility. A tendency to this has existed in every age of the Church. It is characteristic of our fallen nature. But it is greatly fostered by the peculiarity which marks the benevolent action of the present day. Nothing is now considered as well done unless by associated effort. If a drunkard is to be reformed, it must be effected through the American Temperance Society. If virtue and purity are to be promoted, it must be through the American Moral Reform Society. If a child is to be piously educated, it must be through the American Sunday School Union. Thus we have some great American machinery constructed for the doing of every duty, and if we only pay our assessments to keep the wheels in motion, we thereby purchase a dispensation to fold our hands in sleep. This is no caricature. It is a sober statement of things transpiring daily around us.

It is very true that concentrated action is powerful action. The collected rays of the sun will consume a body which the single rays cannot effect; but they must be brought to a focus in such a way as to combine, not to destroy the heat of the individual rays. The cable of many cords will lift a weight which each separate cord cannot do; but if the cable is so formed as to destroy the strength of each cord that forms it, it will be a rope of sand. An army well drilled, and acting in concert, will do more to vanquish a foe, than the extemporaneous fighting of its separate soldiers;—but the army must be so formed as to excite and combine the valour of the soldiers, and not to convert them into drones and cowards. And our primary objection to much of the combined action of this day is, not that it is combined action, but that it is, if not the cause, the occasion of removing from the hearts of Christians, the feeling of individual responsibility to live and to labour for the glory of God. And if our combined moral and religious action is even the innocent occasion of this, it demands the most serious and careful review. And we rejoice that the sifting of the principles on which our *voluntary associations* are founded, has commenced.

Until very recently, the ascending command of the Saviour to preach the gospel to every creature, was universally considered as binding on the Church in its collective and organized capacity. But the wonderful discovery

has been made that the Church is the worst possible organization to act itself, and to institute the agency requisite to carry this command into execution, and a few self-appointed individuals must create an irresponsible agency, and the Church must furnish the funds. The Church, *as such*, must have nothing to do with it; it would be dangerous to trust her with so much power. The consequence is, if missionaries be not supplied to meet the wants of the perishing, the *members* of the church are not to blame—nor yet the *ministers* of the Church, nor yet the courts of the Church. It rests upon a *voluntary association*. And are the members of that association to blame? By no means. It rests upon the association; and an association, like a corporation, has no soul. And thus, virtually, this modern theory of yielding obedience to the last command of Christ, takes away responsibility from the members, and ministers, and courts of the Church, and hangs it in the air.

But it may be replied; "all this is theory—things must be judged by their results." Without stopping to inquire into the correctness of this rule, which may well be questioned, we join issue, and ask, what are the results of the action of voluntary associations? They are to be seen every where. Charity, once so meek, and modest, and retiring, as to blush in looking on its own acts, has now a forehead of brass, and cheeks of marble; and is unwilling to do any thing which is not proclaimed from the house-top. Portions of the Church, half believing that what is said of it is true, is committing her own work into irresponsible hands, and laying aside her armour. Parents, that in years past were in the habit of making their children commit and recite the catechisms, are now content with sending them to the Sabbath School. Ministers that formerly spent some weeks in each year in missionary labour, now leave all that matter to missionary associations. Church members, that used to feel the necessity from day to day of giving, and doing, and praying, now satisfy their conscience with giving. The doing is left to those who are paid for it. Thus the Church has devolved the responsibility of works which should occupy every heart and hand, and which are necessary to her extension and even to her very existence upon a body of irresponsible individuals. Some of these societies have been, at least, the occasion of jealousies, and discord, and alienations, and controversy, and chicanery, and of the disruption of old bonds of confidence

and affection, to an extent unparalleled in the history of the American Church. They have afforded topics for ecclesiastical demagogues on which to write, and make speeches, and print books, and excite party spirit, until the great object of their original creation is now secondary to the gaining of ecclesiastical ascendancy. They were formed as auxiliaries to the Church, but they now desire to govern it. These are their results; and if not all their results, they form a part of them. And unless God in his providence interpose, the feeling of individual responsibility to live and labour for the glory of God will take its departure from the Church: and these self-constituted, self-lauded associations will fall into disrepute. And when that period arrives, we are already upon the verge of a night of deep darkness.

The fact in reference to these societies is, that they are rendered necessary only through the inactivity of the Church, and that they are now the occasion of perpetuating the very feeling they were designed by their founders to counteract. A large portion of them are formed for purposes which belong strictly to the pastoral office, and when the Church returns to its former views of the importance and sacredness of that office, their numerous secretaries and agents, who now threaten us with a mendicant order, may return either to the active duties of the ministry, or to the honest worldly occupations from which they have been called. Look at the Apostolic Church. There was then but one society for every purpose—the Church. And wherever its ministers and missionaries went, they preached righteousness, temperance, and moral purity. And did not the Church spread and prosper? During the Reformation there was but one society for every purpose—the Church. And did not gospel truth spread with the rapidity of the light that rises in the east and shines unto the west? Look at the early history of the Church in our own country. What but the feeling of individual responsibility, and the blessing of God upon individual enterprise, gave religion such a rapid extension in this country?

Before a voluntary association saw the light, the pilgrims and their descendants were in the habit of carrying with them their household gods wherever they wandered or settled. And what makes the difference between this age, and that of the apostles, and of the Reformation, and of the age which has preceded this? The answer is plain. Then

each Christian laboured—now but a few. Then each Christian promoted every good work—now the many give, and the few labour. Then there was a doing of the work of the Lord by detail—now it is done by wholesale. Now there must be a moving of the mass before much is undertaken by individuals; then every individual did all that he could for every cause. This feeling, which we fear is growing in the Church, is contrary to all analogy. The evening sky is illuminated, not by a cluster of stars here and there pouring down a brilliant light, but by the scattered and separate stars, each twinkling in their place. The earth is refreshed and fertilized by the little streams that murmur through the mountains, and meander over the vales; by the gently distilling rain, more than by the driving and violent shower. The earth is reclaimed from a wilderness state, not so much by the operation of large land companies, as by the industry of individuals who fence off and cultivate their own farms. We need but one sun in heaven for man and for beast, for field and for forest, for the vale and the mountain. And the Church should be to the moral, what the sun is to the natural world, enlightening, animating, invigorating, purifying all; and its members should be like the rays of the sun, pure, and shining, and penetrating; adorning, purifying, beautifying every thing which they touch.

An effort should be made on every hand to counteract this spirit in all its tendencies. Children should be as carefully and as constantly taught in every family as if there were not a Sabbath School in existence. When the instructions of the Sabbath School are made a substitute for those of the family, the school itself is no longer an instrument of good. And we must feel as deeply on the subject of missions as if there were not such a society in existence. We should never dream of purchasing exemption from labour by our donations; nor of hiring others to do what God requires at our own hand. And as far as possible, the Church, and its *responsible institutions*, should be made the agents of using for the conversion of the world what its members can contribute for that sublime object. As if there were not a religious organization in existence but the sublime and simple Church, its every member should mount the walls and build. Every individual Christian should do all he can, and at all times, for every good object. And if for no other reason, yet because

voluntary associations are at least the occasion of weakening this Christian rule of life, it is problematical whether they are promoting or retarding the reign of holiness.

Another of the defects of this age is the neglect of private for public duties. The proneness of man to ostentation is an original sin. It pervades all grades and classes of society. A disposition to conceal from the left hand what is done by the right, is one of the ripest and richest fruits of the Spirit. And often as the sentiment is proposed in the Scriptures that God looks not on the outward appearance, yet with multitudes the outward appearance is every thing. And thus it has been in every age. Every generation has had its Pharisees; paying their tithes of mint, annis, and cummin, but neglecting the weightier matters of the law; making their long prayers, and wearing their broad phylacteries in public, whilst in private they fail to cultivate the things that pertain to godliness. Show and ostentation in religion are usually in the proportion of the lack of sincerity and true piety. They are brought in by way of compensation.

The private are by far the most important duties of religion. And the performance of them is the best index of character. We may regularly attend every public means of grace, without religion and without benefit. Not so, however, with the more private means, such as family prayer—closet devotion—self-examination—the prayerful and daily perusal of the Scriptures. Nothing but true religion can sustain in the performance of these for any length of time, nor can they be regularly and statedly performed, without growing in grace.

Attention to the private duties of religion has characterized the saints of every age. Enoch and Noah walked with God. David and Daniel prayed often every day. Such men as Luther, Owen, Henry, Flavel, Edwards, Brainard, Payson, devoted hours of each day to these duties. We cease to wonder at the stature to which these attained, when we are informed of their communings with God in private. And the same may be said of Hannah, of the Shunamitish woman, of the holy women that ministered to the Saviour and his apostles, of Mrs. Rowe, Mrs. Ramsey, and Sarah Osborne. It was in their private musings, and secret and holy meditations, that those fires were kindled which have not died with them, but which will continue to shed a pure light on the Church from age to age. But is it

not so, that there is an increasing tendency to neglect private for more public duties ?

We mean to be understood on this subject, and hence we must specify and explain. Are there not many whose seats are but seldom vacant on the Sabbath, who never seek an interview with God any where else ? Are there not many who go about praying and exhorting, who neglect their own family altar and the closet ? Are there not many who have so much to do in correcting public morals, in forming public sentiment, in guiding public charities, as sometimes to forget private morals, and private decorum, and the duty of exhibiting in private, truth, love and charity ? Are not females seen running to maternal associations to talk about the importance of domestic religion, and to pray *for* their children, who never pray *with* them in private, nor instruct them as they vowed to do when they offered them to God in baptism ? These things we quote merely to illustrate what we mean. It is heaven-wide from our intention to censure even by implication, attendance upon public duties. This is both commanded and necessary. But public duties should never be so multiplied as to interfere with private ones, and should never be considered as possessing superiour claims. The place for the Christian to shine is before the world ; but the way in which oil can best be procured to feed his lamp, is in private communion with his God. Attention to the many and multiplying public duties of the day may secure a name among men, and a degree of celebrity, and gain us a reputation for activity and benevolence ; but it is the daily and sober attention to private duties, that secures a name before God, that warms and purifies the affections, that gives solidity and consistency to character, and that is most in accordance with the spirit of true religion. Nor is this neglect confined to any one class of people. Temptations to it are placed before all. The ministry and the members of the churches are alike in fault ; the former, probably, much more than the latter. And unless, in this respect, the current of this age is arrested, that secret, and private, and individual influence, which in a better age made every spot occupied by the Christian as a green oasis in the desert, will be superseded by a public and general influence, which is weak in the proportion it is extended.

Another of the defects of this age, is the neglect of a clear and full exhibition of the doctrines of the cross. The cross

of Christ has ever been a stumbling-block to the Jew, and foolishness to the Greek. Hence, every age has betrayed a disposition to soften and sweeten its doctrines. We need but refer to the early defection of even the converts of the apostles from the simplicity of the gospel, to the departure of the Episcopal Church from the doctrines clearly taught in its standards, to the Neologism which has supplanted Lutheranism in Germany, to the Unitarianism which has gone up to the Puritan pulpits of New-England, to establish our position. Indeed, the current of the world has ever been adverse to evangelical doctrines; and they have been kept alive in the Church at a fearful sacrifice of the life and blood of the best of her sons. And if these doctrines, at the present day, are not surrendered, there is a growing disposition to keep them out of the pulpit, and away from the people; to regard them more as subjects of metaphysical theory, than as the bones and sinews and muscles of religion. And this has always been the premonitory symptom of their rejection. And there are many causes operating to produce this result.

One of these is, the imperfect education of much of our ministry, and the constant service by which they are occupied when they enter the church. Our population is increasing so rapidly, and our moral wastes lift up such a long, and loud, and mournful cry for ministers, that there is a powerful temptation to abridge courses of study, and to send out novices into those wastes before they are prepared to cultivate them. And when they enter them, they are so constantly occupied by active duties as to be unable to give the time to study, research, and sober investigation, which, as teachers of the people, they should do. Hence they grow not in knowledge—if in mental resources they do not retrograde, they are stationary—and by the necessity of the case, they are compelled to confine their public services to the practical duties, and to the mere generalities of religion. And great care and caution are requisite lest, in our efforts to increase the *quantity* of the ministry, we do not lessen its *quality*; lest, in multiplying hands upon the wall, we do not retard its progress. An ignorant ministry cannot be otherwise than a curse to the Church. The tendency of such a ministry is, either to bury the Church in error, or to burn it up with the fierce fires of fanaticism.

Another of these causes is the belief that doctrinal

preaching is adverse to the promotion of revivals of religion. If this were so, it would be an insuperable objection to it. But the whole history of the protestant church disproves the allegation. The most extensive and pure revivals of modern days have occurred under the ministry of men who boldly and pointedly preached the doctrines of grace. Such a man was Whitfield. Such, also, was Edwards, as his immortal works prove. Such, also, was Jonathan Dickenson, the author of the Five Points. Such, in fine, were the great revivers and promoters of religion, both in Europe and America. They preached the entire ruin of the race—regeneration by the Spirit—justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ—the inability of man to do any thing acceptable to God—his entire dependence upon divine influence—God's sovereignty—election, and final perseverance. These and their kindred doctrines are found thickly scattered through the works of those already named, and are strongly taught by Davies, and Witherspoon, and Smalley, and Hopkins, and Bellamy, and Dwight, and Payson. And we might add a yet longer list, were it proper so to do, of living men to sustain this position. And may it not be because of the withholding of these doctrines, that the revivals of our day are so few and so short-lived, and that they have been attended with so much confusion, and imperfection? If the past history of the Church teaches any thing, it teaches that doctrinal preaching, instead of being adverse to revivals of religion, is directly promotive of them.

Another of these causes is rather a growing mania for what is called substantial Christianity, to the rejection of any sectarian form of it—that is, neither to preach nor to propagate any thing in which all sincere Christians cannot unite. Absurd as is this visionary theory, it has its advocates and believers. And nothing is necessary but its universal prevalence to banish Christianity from the world. Because some Arminians and Calvinists are pious, nothing must be said about the doctrines peculiar to either sect. Because some Baptists and Pædo Baptists are pious, nothing must be said upon baptism as to mode or subject. Because some Quakers are pious, nothing must be said upon the ordinances or positive institutions of religion. And because the advocates and opposers of forms of prayer are pious, nothing must be said on that important subject. Thus, this

theory, by prohibiting the preaching and the propagation of things on which good people differ, lays an axe at the root of the doctrines and the ordinances, and the institutions, and even the ministry of the Church of Christ. These are consequences which legitimately flow from the scheme, and which prove it both absurd and ridiculous. And in the wake of this theory, we see rising a cloudy divinity which conceals the Sun of Righteousness—we see mystic devotion superseding evangelical doctrine ; and definite Christian sentiment giving place to the most vague and rapid theological generalities.

As the limits of an article in a publication like this, forbid a full discussion of this great subject, and as we must stop somewhere in the midst of it, we have resolved to stop here. And we will only detain our readers further with a brief statement of two important lessons taught by the whole discussion.

It teaches us what is the best course to secure the ultimate prosperity of a church. That course is to inquire for the old paths, and to walk in them. Let the fire of devotion be kept burning on the family altar. Let parents diligently bring up their children in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and from lisping infancy instruct them in the doctrines, precepts, and duties of religion. Let every member of the Church be careful, and take all pains, to form a solid Christian character. This can be done only by prayer, reading, reflection, digestion, and self-examination. Let every individual, without waiting for others, do his duty in the circle in which they move ; let there be no devolving of duty upon others. Let the minister preach the truth in love ; and let the people practise it. Let every duty have its place and its time. Let none be unduly magnified, nor depressed. Let there be no effort at compensation ; making the doing of some things atone for the neglect of others. Let a course like this be pursued by any church, and the Spirit will be there abiding. Peace will spread its balmy wings over it. Its members will grow stronger and stronger, and more and more abounding in the fruits of the Spirit. A church thus living, may be destitute of the excitement of enthusiasm, but it will have the steady pulse indicative of health. It may not be visited by the heavy showers and the swollen streams. But it will have the gently distilling rain which

soaks into the earth ; and that constant and gentle flow of the river of life which fertilizes, and which makes the trees of the Lord ever verdant and fruitful.

This discussion also teaches us that the kingdom of heaven is not so near as many imagine. This age does not answer the description given in the Bible of that which is to precede the period when the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord. We are too boastful and vain-glorious, and too fond of eulogizing "this glorious era," "the nineteenth century." We are nowhere taught that the ultimate triumphs of the Church will be preceded by a vain-glorious age ; when his people will sound the trumpet and boast as they that are putting off the harness. On the contrary, we are told of tribulation ; and are taught that in the age introductory to the millenium, the conflict between the Church and its enemies will rage with the greatest fury ; because that, when Satan knows his time is short, he will come down in great wrath. The most bloody battle of modern days, was that which preceded and obtained the general peace of Europe. And before the Church yet triumphs from shore to shore, before the last fortress of the enemy is dismantled, there will be a conflict which will cause the earth to tremble. Popery is yet what it was in the days of its Gregories, and Clements, and Johns. And Mahometanism is yet what it was in the days of its Alis and Omars. And Heathenism has lost nothing of its sullen resistance to the truth. Nor will these always look quietly on, and behold without an effort to resist it, their territories won over to the Prince of Peace. There is yet a battle to be fought, when, as seen in vision by him of Patmos, the blood will come up to the horses' bridles. True, the result is not doubtful. Victory will perch upon the banner of the people and saints of the Most High. But until the battle is fought and won, let us cease glorifying our age and ourselves. Let every Christian stand in his lot and do his duty. There is yet much land to be occupied—and many enemies to be subdued—and many difficulties to be surmounted. That land is not to be occupied, nor are these enemies to be overcome, nor these difficulties to be surmounted by visionary theories and visionary anticipations. The Church must pray more, do more, give more. It must be embued with holier enterprise, and put forth loftier exertion. Instead of putting off her armour as if the work were done, she must

be girding it on, as if it were just commencing. The watchword should pass along the whole host of God's elect, **GO FORWARD.** In obedience to this command let us go forward; and then, *in due time*, will be heard the cry from earth and heaven, Hallelujah, salvation, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

ART. V. PECULIAR FASTIDIOUSNESS OF THE AGE IN RESPECT TO MINISTERS.

By JOHN H. AVERY.

THE time shall come, says Paul to Timothy, when the people shall have itching ears. The time has come. A prurient sensation pervades the community, an itching, teasing desire to hear something *new*. It desires novelty for its own sake. It seeks originality rather than permanent utility.

Why is it that the bosom of the Church is torn by intestine faction; that the gentle dews of heaven are withheld; that spiritual death pervades the land? Why, but because the people, to a great extent, will not endure sound doctrine; but "after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers; having itching ears." Other diseases spend themselves, or are thrown off; this cleaves like leprosy. The more it is gratified, the more it burns. Other maladies kill the body, this the soul. How often does it embitter the Christian's sweet hopes, and weigh down the aspirations of his bright faith? How can his soul be lifted to the throne of God in prayer, while weighing the force of the speaker's petitions? How can it be filled with active, fervent, and delightful love, when carping and cavilling at the preacher's words?

So delicate are the sensibilities of *some*, that the least repetition in a discourse is past endurance; the use of what they term "cant phrases," insupportable; the bare mention of the word hell, barbarous, insufferable. Now are any so grounded in the faith, as no longer to need "line upon line, and pre-

cept upon precept?" Nay, are not those very persons who complain of repetition, among the most forgetful hearers of God's word? When we consider how large a portion of every evangelical discourse is Bible truth, truth from the lips of Jehovah, truth which will constitute the delightful theme of the Christian's contemplation through eternity, how heinous appear such complaints? What, are these sacred truths so hacknied, that we cannot think upon them, for one short hour, unless arrayed in the meretricious garb of *earthly* beauty? How, then, can we bear the thought of dwelling upon them for ever in heaven? And what though they are sometimes found couched in what are termed "cant phrases?" Are they not the same hallowed, precious truths still? And the word *hell* and the like—do these convey aught of terror to the mind that does not "hang around the second death?" Besides, if we do not call things by their *right* names, by what terms *shall* we designate them?

But how large a part of the encomiums and strictures, passed upon almost every discourse, have reference merely to the *costume*. How much attention is given to the *manner*, how little to the *spirit* with which they are uttered!

How often do a whole assembly watch the frail creature who, with trembling hand, is lifting the veil that shrouds the mercy-seat! They mark his gestures, his diction, his intonation, *anything* but the glories of that God he is struggling to reveal.

It is this fastidious spirit, moreover, that steels the heart of the impenitent against the influence of truth. Instead of taking the posture of trembling penitents to hear God's message, from the lips of His minister, they assume the attitude of critics. While the man of God portrays the terrors and glories of Jehovah, they criticise. While he pours out his soul in prayer on their behalf—they criticise. Thus are the very arrows of the Almighty rendered powerless.

It is this, also, that pours poison into the life-blood of the new-born soul. He learns to cavil almost as soon as he draws his breath in the spiritual world; and thus but too often converts the "sincere milk of the word" into wormwood and gall. It is this that blasts his growth. And shall we cherish it, until it have penetrated the very core of the heart, and poisoned every thought, and sensibility, and feeling? Shall God's holy day be spent in speaking or

hearing some "*new thing*?" With what utter apathy do we but too often regard what we deem a common-place preacher?

"As in a *theatre*, the eyes of men,
After a well-graced *actor* leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious;
Even so, or with much more contempt"—

are men's eyes but too often turned upon the humble, devoted, though less gifted servant of Jesus. It is not the *gem* they seek, but the casket. What cause for fear that God will give them nothing else!

The time *was*, when the first inquiry in reference to a candidate for settlement, was—"Is he a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost?" Now the inquiry has come to be, whether he is a *smart* man. But the *smartest* are not always the *best* men. Hence, it often happens that the Head of the Church *gives* people a smart man, and "sends leanness into their souls." Now, when they find themselves pining and starving, they turn against the man of their choice, and rest not day nor night until he is dismissed. And it may be that he is as ready to *go*, as they are urgent to *have* him go. For *smart* men can always get settlements at short notice. Nor are those, to whom the thing is referred, reluctant to grant dismissal; since it is often the case, that those, who make the greatest noise abroad, are least respected at *home*.

But the evil, of which we speak, stops not here. The manner in which the minister discharges *pastoral* duties, subjects him to great illiberality of stricture. If he visit much, he acquires the character of a great visiter. And this poor family and that complain bitterly that "notwithstanding the minister visits others so much, he has been inside of their house but ten times in a whole year." If, on the other hand, he finds it necessary to study some, and cannot therefore visit every individual of his parish many times in the course of the year, they will say—"To be sure he does very well in the pulpit; but then he is no *pastor*."

If he dress well, he is extravagant. If ill, penurious. "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, we have piped unto you, but ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, but ye have not

lamented." For one minister "comes neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil;" another comes "eating and drinking, and they say, behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners."

But, the fastidiousness of the age is exhibited in nothing more strongly than in a craving desire for excitement. It has arisen to such a height, that it can neither be gratified, nor allayed. It cannot be gratified; for like all other morbid appetites, it acquires strength by indulgence, and cries continually, "Give, give." It cannot be allayed, at least, until all unnatural stimuli are withdrawn. A large number in almost every church in the land attend meeting, not so much to be enlightened, as quickened; not so much to gain clearer views of God and His law, as to be wrought into a spiritual frame. Hence, they do not come from their closets, with hearts *prepared* to "receive with meekness the engrafted word;" but with a mass of ice encircling them, to be melted away by the power of the preacher. If, therefore, their *frozen* hearts are not melted, they must have *another minister*, one who *can* move them. This is the chief cause of the pastoral removals, so frequent at the present day. And they will doubtless increase, until this accursing spirit is checked. For God is not honoured, his blessing is not sought, the truth is not sufficiently recognised, that man speaketh to the ear, but *God only* to the heart. Besides, excitement, produced by external means merely, is but too often mere *animal* excitement, or the result of sympathetic imitation. And those who are the subjects of it, therefore, become more and more fastidious and querulous. Why? Because the human soul is so constituted that the oftener deep emotion is elicited, without terminating in *action*, self-directed, self-sustained *action*, the harder does it become to renew such emotion. For the soul is, for the most part, passive in such a process; and, therefore, becomes more and more callous and obtuse, until no human means *can* move it. For confirmation of this remark, look at those who have often been the subjects of religious impression. Has not every successive excitement of this kind left them worse than it found them, until perhaps, they have become *past* feeling? Is it then at all strange, that those who frequent the house of God for the sake of mere excitement, should come away disappointed, when they do not find it, and dissatisfied with the preacher who has not furnished it?

But allowing that there may be much holy feeling mingled with this strange fire, that is but too often kindled from the altar of God, still, that state into which many would plunge themselves and the Church, is against nature. All her changes, mighty though they be, are the result of laws not fitful in their operation. It is also against the economy of grace. The spasms and contortions sometimes effected in the Church are much like those effected by stimulants upon the human body; powerful in their immediate effects, but invariably followed by collapse. Look at the *recent*, as well as the more ancient history of the Church, and see if she has ever long continued in a state of feverish excitement. Have not such seasons been uniformly followed by correspondent depression? I would not, however, depreciate healthful, equable, sustained excitement, nor undervalue revivals of God's work. They are most auspicious tokens of his presence; living fountains in the desert; an image of heaven. Oh, that God would multiply their number and their power; oh, that those who minister at the altar, may so pray and labour "*with one accord*," that the days of Pentecost may revisit and bless the Church! It is *morbid, diseased, enervating* excitement only that is to be deprecated. Yet so strong is the *desire* for this excitement, that a minister of moderate parts is often unable to meet the demands of a single parish, consisting of a few hundred souls. The aid of revival itinerants is sought. But this, instead of *meeting*, does but *increase* the demand. After one man has exhausted his magazine, *another* and *another* is called. And the oftener a place has been thus burnt over, the more difficult does it become to devise *any* means by which the dying embers may be again revived and fanned into a blaze. Where is this mania to end? Is the word of God so stale and weak, that none but a Boanerges can give it power upon the conscience and the heart? Blessed Spirit! desert not in grief our sanctuaries and our altars! Inspire with courage those who stand on the watch-towers of Zion, that they "cry aloud and spare not," until the people turn from their abominations, and the plague be stayed; "in wrath, remember mercy!"

ART. VI. INQUIRY RESPECTING THE CLAIMS OF THE SON
TO EQUAL HOMAGE WITH THE FATHER.

By REV. RICHARD W. DICKINSON, New-York.

IN physical inquiries no true philosopher forgets his actual situation, that however comprehensive his mind, he dwells in a dark place where the light is admitted only through a crevice; that whatever his intellectual eminence, compared with the low-thoughted mass, he dwells in a vale where his vision is obscured by impenetrable fogs, or his prospect is intercepted by inaccessible mountains. Much less, then, in our inquiries respecting the discoveries of the Bible, does it become us to forget, that it is a revelation from that Being whose perfections are all infinite to a creature whose faculties are all finite; and that consequently instead of revealing what God is in himself, it can be designed to reveal only what God is in relation to mankind. If in natural science we are conversant only with the relations of things which in themselves elude our most acute investigations, how can our ignorance of the nature of revealed things, be any obstacle to our certain knowledge, or reasonable belief? The blind man who refused to believe in the existence of the sun because he did not see it, was in relation to nature, it appears to us, as sage a philosopher as the man who rejects any of the doctrines of Revelation on account of mystery. Could we have attained to the knowledge of God's mode of existence by an induction of facts carefully collected, or as an inference from premises which our own minds had furnished, there would be no more room for skepticism than there now exists in reference to Newton's Principia—there would have been no necessity, as far as this point is concerned, for a revelation. A revelation necessarily implies truths which are not within the range of the human faculties. Let it once be established that a revelation has been made to man, and whatever propositions are hermeneutically deducible from its pages must be accredited solely on the authority of Heaven. Mysterious they will be, in the nature of the things which they involve; but contrary to

reason they cannot be proved to be, because as revealed principles, they do not come within the perceptible relations of our ideas. The clown, who, because they are incomprehensible to his mind, rejects the principles of the Newtonian philosophy, acts less unreasonably than the self-styled philosopher who, for a similar reason, scouts the principles of the divine science. Their intellects are on a level compared with the disparity which exists between the finite and the infinite mind; while the former is more philosophical in withholding credence from human testimony to facts incomprehensible in their nature, than the latter in rejecting the mysterious doctrines of a volume supported by the authority of Him who understands the nature and relations of all things. It were less absurd, we apprehend, to believe for Tertullian's reason, than to say with the Rationalist Foster, that where "mystery begins, religion ends." As well affirm, that there are no facts in natural philosophy, no demonstrations in mathematics, for in each of these sciences we arrive by infallible steps to conclusions of which it is impossible to form any clear, determinate conceptions. Where mystery begins? It begins in first principles; or there can be no such thing as truth or religion—no existence—no causes, nor effects! It begins in the throne of God, and ends but with eternity! A revelation without its mysteries, were as great a solecism as a temple without its god; or a creation by a creature.

Let any man attempt to comprehend God's self-existence; his immensity without extension; his duration without succession; his production of the universe out of nothing; his ever acting and never changing nature; his unerring prescience, and his creatures' freedom.—Can he deny that the human mind is unequal in its grasp to that which it may demonstrate? And if he must admit that the attributes of God, when contemplated either in relation to time or space are perfectly incomprehensible, shall he be forward to reject the Bible because it discloses to our faith an incomprehensible mode of the divine existence? Not, if he would be consistent, or desires not to take his place in the lowest scale of intellectual character, with that of the atheist.

The truth is, if we are to receive from on high only that which may be fully comprehended, there can be no room for the exercise of faith. We do reverence to our own minds, and not to the uncreated intellect—to our precon-

ceived opinions, and not to His thoughts which are not as our thoughts ; we exalt our puny faculties above Infinity. "By how much any divine mystery," said the great Bacon, "is more unpalatable and incredible, by so much the more honour is given to God in believing, and the victory of our faith is made more noble." So thought the very heathen. "Men conceived," said Tacitus, "that to respect the mysteries of the gods, and believe without inquiring, would be the best proof of veneration."

Reason, however, is not to be degraded from its proper rank ; nor may the understanding be insulted ; but reason is not unfrequently identified with preconceptions ; and an appeal to reason is generally nothing more than an appeal to that faculty of our minds which is governed by sense.

If the province of reason be the same in religion, with philosophy, no alternative remains for us but this—either to declare ourselves to be infallible ; or else to admit that our passions and prejudices may distort our reasonings and invalidate our conclusions ; either to reject the inspiration of the Bible ; or bow our understandings to the truths and facts which reason may discover on its pages.

We have made these remarks, not only on account of their prospective bearing on the subject which we propose to investigate ; but because the pride of the human mind has often precluded belief in that *mystery of God in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. And knowing that if our gospel be veiled, it is veiled to those who destroy themselves, whose minds the god of this world hath blinded, we deem it of the last importance that the minds of our readers should be divested of all undue prepossessions or imaginary difficulties ; and that they should come at once to the simple testimony of the word of God, *the faithful and true witness*, for it is written **THAT ALL MEN SHOULD HONOUR THE SON EVEN AS THEY HONOUR THE FATHER.**

The genuineness of this passage will not be assailed ; nor can its meaning be obscured or perverted. It is intelligible to every capacity ; and though it would be rushing in "where angels dare not tread," to attempt to comprehend in the divine nature the mystery of the triune God, it is the legitimate province of reason to ascertain the grounds on which the proposition which this passage involves is founded. I may not be able to comprehend the mode of the divine existence, but I may honour Jesus Christ if the Scrip-

tures on their authority require me, and by their evidence constrain me to believe that with the Father he is equally entitled to the honour of mankind.

But what in the view of *dispassionate reason would entitle Jesus Christ to equal homage with God?*

Would it be simply on account of the works which he did? We are aware of the tendency of human nature to idolize the worker of miracles; and we are confident that any man might work a miracle, should he be commissioned and empowered by the Author of nature. The simple fact, then, that Christ did many mighty works, is not sufficient to this end, though the candid mind, on the discovery that his miracles were differently performed from those of either the prophets or of the apostles, may not readily preclude its consequent suspicion of his high origin. On the supposition that he were but a man, how is it to be explained, that his miracles bear no marks of dependence on a higher power? By a motion of his hand, he stilled the waves of the sea;—with more ease than we could awake a friend from ordinary sleep, did he break the slumbers of the dead. It was but a word from his lips, and the fig-tree was withered and dried up from its roots—the tempest ceased its raging—the mouldering dead came forth from the grave. It is not surprising that the by-standers, overwhelmed with astonishment, fell down at his feet in involuntary obeisance. Here was one not indistinctly reminding them of *Him who spake and it was done*. And yet so far from counteracting the impression which his miracles produced on their minds, he distinctly informed them that all that the Father did on earth, he also did; that the Father's works were his works. All that he performed, he attributed to himself, as well as to God; and charged them to believe his works, *that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him*..

Or, would it be on account of the prophecies which Christ uttered? We reasonably believe that God is with a prophet; but this cannot obligate us to pay divine honours to a prophet. He is indeed highly favoured of God, but still he is only a man. *Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; but was Christ *moved* in like manner? As men, the Jewish prophets were as ignorant of the future as we. They could predict no event of themselves. Selected by God for this purpose, they awaited the inspiration of his Spirit. When prophesying, with the exception of Moses,

who, according to Maimonides, was favoured with a habitual and superiour degree of illumination, they were thrown into a frenzy—they trembled and fainted. It is probable they were seldom if ever conscious of the things they uttered; and certain it is, they announced no future event until the spirit of prophecy was kindled within them by something plainly extraneous and beyond their power; ordinarily by the help or ministry of an angel.

But how may it be imagined that one would speak who was omniscient; who saw the end from the beginning; to whom all things, whether past or future, were immediately present? Precisely as we would speak of objects and events which were within the range of sensible vision; which we are accustomed to see from day to day. So prophesied the Messiah, without either constraint, effort, or perturbation. Future mysteries and events seemed as familiar to his mind as the objects of sense, amid which we have grown to manhood, are to our eyes. When he prophesied, it was in his own name: *I say unto you*. And whether the subject of his prophecy were his own sufferings and death, the destruction of the temple and of the holy city, the resurrection of the dead, the awful solemnities of the day of judgement, his own coming in the clouds of heaven with all the holy angels, or the eternal allotments of the righteous and the wicked, he spoke with manifest ease and composure, without seeming in the least astonished; or betraying any disposition to excite marvel. If Jesus Christ had been only a prophet, was there not, considering the nature of the human faculties, and the fact that we can know nothing of the future but from God, something very remarkable, rather inexplicable to us, in the manner of his prophesying? Strange, that all preceding prophets should have prophesied of *him*, and that he, if only a man, should make his own doings the burden of his prophecies; that when transfigured on the mount, he should not only be invested with a glory transcendentally surpassing that of Moses and Elijah, but singled out, and by an audible voice from heaven, declared to be *God's only begotten and well beloved Son*.

But proceeding to a general view of the sentiments which Christ uttered—has he consequently a claim on our homage? No; not a few men have uttered extraordinary sayings; and most readily might Infinite Wisdom inspire any mortal with the utterance of moral truths which no

unassisted mind could excogitate or conceive. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that *no man ever spoke as Christ spoke*. Hear him. He styles himself *the light of the world*; *the pearl of unknown price*; *the hidden treasure*; *the living vine*; *the bread of God*; *the way, the truth, and the life*. He expounds the law with the authority of a legislator; condemns the traditions, and mortifies the pride of the scribes and pharisees; pours the light of fulfilment on the hidden meaning of ancient prediction; displays the riches of the gospel; unravels the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; detects the secrets of the human heart. How weighty the sentences which fell from his lips; how simple and comprehensive his precepts; how novel and sublime his doctrines; how familiar and pertinent his illustrations; how wise his teachings; how authoritative and conclusive his decisions.

Such was the inimitable combination of authority and gentleness, of dignity and condescension, of zeal and wisdom, of sublimity and plainness in all that he uttered, as might have almost led us to anticipate his own assertion,—that *all things were delivered to him of his Father, and that no man knew who the Son was save the Father, nor who the Father was save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son should reveal him*.

We may not affirm, however, that in Christ's teachings there is to be found conclusive evidence of his divine nature; yet who will say that he did not speak with a native majesty befitting the Son of God; that he did not allude to the great things pertaining to the invisible kingdom of God with all the gracefulness and familiarity with which one born a prince would speak of his father's court? Was there any thing in his language which did not at all times comport with so high an origin, or breathe the consciousness of his union with the Father? He who can ponder the sayings of Christ, without being inspired with awe and reverence, is for ever insensible to any impressions of infinite excellence and grandeur.

Shall we, then, find in the moral character of Christ a sufficient reason for elevating him in our devotions, to an equality with the Father? This particular might naturally sway the judgements of many minds; for in a world where all have corrupted their ways before God, we cannot but respect any one who seems to partake less of the imperfections and frailties of human nature, and to embody more of

those conceptions of goodness and virtue which we are able to form ; but it will readily occur to the philosophic mind, that perfection in human character is no evidence of a divine nature, for God can render any man perfectly holy.

Still, it may not be without its important bearing on our argument to recall the fact, that Jesus Christ is the only model of perfection in real life the world has ever beheld. The characters of *holy men of old* were marred by those infirmities which are common to our nature ; while their brightest virtues fade away before the resplendent lineaments of the *sun of righteousness* : much less, then, can the most exemplary of the heathen worthies challenge a comparison with the holy Jesus.

Is it not a little remarkable, that among all whom God has commissioned to instruct mankind, Jesus Christ should be the only instance of perfection in character ? that the human mind can form no conception of excellence which his actions did not adumbrate ? that we cannot conceive of the Father as surpassing in excellence the moral lineaments of his Son ? that there is nothing clear and definite in our conceptions of God except when we gaze on the aspect of Jesus ? that the world never had any conceptions worthy of the Great God until Jesus Christ appeared as *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person* ?

Let any one dispassionately contemplate his piety and benevolence ; his compassion for man ; his forgiveness of injuries ; his meekness and lowliness ; his superiority to the world ; his command of the inferiour appetites ; his fortitude and constancy ; his prudence and discretion ;—in his character a union of every possible excellence in all their consistency, strength, and just proportions—all the stronger virtues without austerity, and all the softer traits without weakness—all that is high and lofty, with all that is lowly and attractive, and say, whether here is not a personage at once divine and human ; infinitely above us, and yet level to our comprehension ; mysterious, and yet familiarly known—say, whether this character do not embody our every possible conception of an incarnate Deity—God stooping to man—in all the fulness and harmony of his perfections made visible to mortal eye ? Who can fail to see in Jesus Christ the refulgence of Divinity—the glory as of *the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth* ? Or

who shall not now be inclined to admit the declaration of Christ himself: *he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father* :

"Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious; in him all his Father shone
Substantially expressed; and in his face
Divine compassion visibly appear'd,
Love without end, and without measure grace."

It may not be positively asserted, however, that the works and prophecies, and teachings, and perfect character of Christ impose on us an obligation to pay him divine homage. Notwithstanding all this, we have not conclusive evidence that he was of a divine nature; though the supposition that he was a mere man, is attended with no ordinary difficulties, when we merely glance at what he did, what he taught, how he predicted, and how he lived!

These difficulties are enhanced by the fact, which will not be denied by those who admit the inspiration of the Evangelists, of his miraculous conception. For how happens it, that of all born of woman, Jesus Christ should be the only one who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; that if no more than a prophet, he should not, like his predecessors in the prophetic office, have been conceived in the natural way? Does not his miraculous conception constitute the whole distinction between the character of Christ in the condition of a man, and that of any other prophet? Does it not imply a higher purpose than that of a mere teacher? Might not a mere man have been rendered competent by divine illumination, to convey all that men have capacity to receive? Could his intercourse with God have been of any higher kind than the nature of any other man might have equally admitted, had his conception been the result of Mary's marriage with her husband?

But miraculous conception does not of itself imply pre-existence, much less divinity—Admit it; yet if Christ had a previous existence—had he been the uncreated Word, his assumption of humanity would have implied a miraculous conception, though this had not been recorded; for how could union with the divine nature have been the principle of an existence physically derived from Adam?

Here, then, is a personage who, by the circumstances of his birth, the features of his character, and the incidents

of his life, stands alone in the annals of the world—in the sublimity of his virtue, himself a greater miracle than any which he wrought; one, who so far from bearing any impression of the place of his birth, was more distinguished from his countrymen than the Jew was from the Gentile; who was as superiour to the prophets, as they were to the people; to whom Moses, the greatest of the prophets, with whom Jehovah conversed face to face, as a man talketh with his friend, bore no higher relation than that of a servant to a Son*—to whom the very angels are inferiour; whose advent was announced at the fall of man; who is pointed out, both by Moses himself, and with gradually increasing clearness by all succeeding prophets; who was the hero of the patriarchal and the Levitical, and constitutes at once, the perpetual theme and the indispensably necessary key-stone of the Christian dispensation; whose conception and birth-place, whose works and virtues, whose entire history answered in every particular to a long succession of prophecies; whose character and actions, too, accord in every respect with whatever may be our abstract conceptions of an incarnation of Deity; whose life is an enigma which no Œdipus can unravel save by the supposition that he was essentially of the same nature with his Father, and yet, *Jesus Christ was a mere man!*

“Supposing there were a god who did not discover himself immediately to our senses, were it possible for him to give stronger proofs of his existence than what appear on the whole face of nature? What, indeed, could such a being do but copy the present economy of things?” Notwithstanding this concession, Philo† could deny the existence of a God! But is he more unreasonable than the man who, after similar concessions, denies the divinity of the Son of God? For supposing that God were to send a being into the world of the same specific nature with himself, and one, who by consequence, could not discover his true nature to our senses, were it possible for him to afford stronger evidence of his assumption of humanity than such as appear *in the face of Jesus Christ?* To assume our nature without sin, he must be born of a woman by a miraculous conception; to convince us of his independent power, he must perform miracles in his own name; of his omniscience, he must

* Heb. 1: 3—8.

† Hume's Dialogues on Natural Religion, p. 232.

both foretell the future and read the heart ; of his wisdom, he must demonstrate his prodigious superiority to our narrow apprehensions ; of his holiness, there will be no room to discover a flaw in his character ; of his justice, he will be uncompromising in his rebukes ; of his goodness, he will provide for the needy, sympathize with the afflicted, compassionate the guilty ; of his sovereignty, he will forgive sins, and by a miracle prove them to be forgiven.

Yes ; if we can trace the attributes of an invisible God in the works of creation, must not the works, the prophecies, the teachings, and the surpassing excellencies of Jesus Christ induce on our minds, to say the least, a not unreasonable impression that God was manifest in the flesh.—*Bene speremus, comites, HOMINUM enim vestigia video*, exclaimed *Aristippus* the *Cyrenaic*, when, being shipwrecked on an unknown coast, he saw some geometrical diagrams traced on the sand : so might man, while groping in the darkness of nature, exclaim, as he happened on Judea and beheld the wonders which had there been enacted, **BEHOLD, I SEE THE FOOTSTEPS OF A GOD !**

To attempt to account for the actions of Christ on any principle short of a mysterious union with the Father, appears to us quite as absurd as if one who undertook to account for the actions of Socrates, should begin with telling us that Socrates was actuated by a principle of thought and design ; and pretending to explain how he came to be sitting in prison at that time when he was condemned to die, he should acquaint us that the body of Socrates consisted of bones and muscles ; that the bones were solid and had their articulations, while the muscles were capable of being contracted and extended, by which he was enabled to move his body and put himself in a sitting posture ; and after adding an explanation of the nature of sound, and of the organs of the voice, he should boast at length that he had thus accounted for Socrates sitting and conversing with his friends in prison.*

That there is no abstract absurdity in the idea of an incarnation of divinity, will appear from the remark which was made by the wisest of the heathen philosophers† to *Aristodemus*. But to give the greater force to the presumption

* Vide *Œuvres De Platon*. Tom. I., p. 279.

† Vide *Zenophon's Memorabilia* of Socrates.

which arises from the supernatural endowments of Christ that he was a divine personage, it is necessary to keep in view the stupendous object he contemplated. It was a rule of the ancient critics with relation to the machinery of a drama,—“that a god must never be introduced unless to accomplish some important design which could not be otherwise effectuated.” Now, if this rule were founded in the decision of an unsophisticated judgement, there arises a natural presumption in favour of Christ’s divinity. What can surpass either in importance or in grandeur the object which he proposed to accomplish? Indeed, unless strongly impressed with a sense of the wants and woes of our nature, unless like Socrates, we feel our urgent need of a divine teacher and helper, it is questionable whether we are in a proper frame of mind to attain to the knowledge of the truth. It is in biblical as in physical inquiries. “Since this world is a system of benevolence,” remarked a philosopher,* “and consequently its author the object of unbounded love and admiration, benevolence and piety are our only true guides in our inquiries into it, the only keys which will unlock the mysteries of nature and clews which lead through her labyrinths.” They whose minds have been impressed with the general idea of prevailing order, and of benevolent design, have been the most successful in detecting the secrets of nature. And in like manner, may not the reverential conviction of the authority of God’s moral government, and the benevolence of his feelings towards his fallen creatures contribute to enlighten our views, and guide our investigations respecting the *mystery of godliness*? There is no law of our nature better ascertained than that the decisions of the understanding are in a great degree controuled by the tendencies of the will.—Hence, we are inclined to think, that the reception or the rejection of the doctrine of Christ’s equality with the Father, like any other truth having a practical tendency will, after all, depend not less on the operation of moral causes, than on the deductions of reason, or an induction from the sacred writings.† With the temper of mind

* Hartley’s *Observations on Man*.

† Perhaps the profound remark of Coleridge will apply as well to an efficient belief in the Divinity of the Son, as in Christianity—that in order to an efficient belief, a man must have been a Christian; and this is the seeming *argumentum in circulo*, incident to all spiritual truths, to every subject not presentable under the forms of time and space, as long as we attempt to master by the reflex acts of the understanding, what we can

and heart which becomes an inquirer after truth, we think it difficult to resist the presumption which arises in favour of Christ's divinity, when we simply confine our attention to the fact, that his history answers to what might have been our conceptions of a god-man. This, however, is not sufficient to authorize our belief, or to justify us in rendering to him religious homage. Be it so.

But suppose the Jewish Scriptures had foretold that this same Christ would be the *Mighty God, God with us*; that the precursor of Jesus would be sent as the harbinger of the *Most High*; that Jesus himself had asserted his equality with the Father; that his Apostles ascribed to him the attributes and works of Deity;—if all *Scripture be given [by inspiration of God]*, what must be our irresistible conclusion? Shall we not with one accord fall down before the Messiah and individually exclaim, *My Lord, and my God!*

Hear, then, the voice of prophecy; “*for to him give all the prophets witness. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.* Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice upon the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely. And this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.† Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold THY KING cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; Lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.‡ “So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was priced at of them.”§ “Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: And the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.”|| “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH, make straight in the desert a high-*

only know by the act of becoming. Do the will of my Father, and ye shall know whether I am of God. Aids to Reflection, Appendix, p. 398.

* Isaiah, 42: 6. † Jer. 23: 5, 6. ‡ Zech. 9: 9. § Zech. 11: 12.

|| Mal. 3: 1.

way for our God. And the glory of JEHOVAH shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."* "JEHOVAH, GOD OF HOSTS, shall be a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to the two houses of Israel. They shall look on me whom they have pierced, said God."† "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."‡

Such are a few of the Old Testament predictions; and to whom do they apply if not to Jesus Christ? Were they not quoted and applied to Him both by the Evangelists and the Apostles? Did not Christ, beginning at *Moses and all the prophets, expound unto his disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*?§ Nay; in what light did He continually represent himself?—As one who had left the bosom of the Father; who had come down from heaven; who was before Abraham; who was before all things; in the knowledge of whom, as in the knowledge of the Father, consisted eternal life; who did the same works with the Father; who had the same glory with the Father; who had life in himself, as the Father hath life in himself.—"*Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me.||—I and my Father are one.*"** Did he not regard himself as equal with the Father? And even, when on one occasion, he said, *My Father is greater than I*, what could he have referred to, when this declaration is viewed in connection with the preceding one, but the filial subordination in the equal Deity—that he was then in a state of humiliation, *God manifest in the flesh*; for if not essentially divine, who does not perceive that he betrayed a mind as weak or deranged as any of us would, who should rise from his seat, and gravely assert, that God was greater than he!

But will it be said, with the Jews of old, "he beareth witness of himself, his witness is not true?" In what light, then, was he represented by the Apostles?—As "the sec-

¹ When Christ said, *My Father is greater than I*, he was not comparing his own nature with that of the Father, but his condition. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice that I said I go unto the Father, for the Father is greater than I*; i. e., ye would rejoice at my exaltation to bliss and glory with my Father; that I am to leave this state of humiliation, and resume the glory which I had with the Father before the world was.

* Isa. 40. 3, 5. † Zech. 12: 10, John 19: 37. ‡ Psalm. 97: 7. Heb. 1: 8, 9. § Luke, 24: 27. || John, 14: 10. ** Jo. 10: 15.

ond man who is the Lord from heaven ;"* as "the Lord of all"†—"the Lord of glory."‡ "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ;"§ "who is the image of the invisible God ;"|| "who is far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."***

But lift up your eyes and behold ! Who spake this universe into existence ? JESUS CHRIST ; "for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist ;†† upholding all things by the word of his power."

Look around you—see the consequences of sin in a lost and ruined race—and who is it that condescended to seek and to save that which was lost ? JESUS CHRIST ; "for being in the form (the condition) of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, (regarding not his equality with God,) he yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in the fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."‡‡

Think of the myriads of the dead ! At whose voice shall the sea give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell, the dead which are in them ? JESUS CHRIST ; "for the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."§§

And by whom shall we all be judged, every man according to their works ? JESUS CHRIST ; "for we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body."||| Yes, it is He that will sit upon the great white throne ;—this very Jesus shall come in the glory of his Father, with all the holy angels, and in that *day of the Lord*, that *great day of his wrath*, while he draws the impassable and interminable line between the righteous and the wicked, will the heav-

* 1 Cor. 15: 47. † Acts, 10: 36. ‡ 1 Cor. 2: 8. § Col. 2: 9. || Col. 1: 15. ** Eph. 1: 21. †† Col. 1: 16, 17. ‡‡ Phil. 2: 6, 7, 8. §§ John, 5: 28. ||| 2 Cor. 5: 10.

ens pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, be burnt up.

What, now, think ye of Christ? Should not every knee bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

But to place the argument, if possible, in a still stronger light, let it be inquired what attribute has the Father, that belongs not to the Son? What relation do we sustain to the former, that we do not to the latter? What duties do we owe the one, that we ought not to pay to the other?

Is the Father eternal in his mode of existence? "I am Alpha and Omega," saith Christ the Lord, "which is, and which was, and which is to come. I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore."† Is the Father independent? "I have power to lay my life down, and I have power to take it again: I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."‡ Is the Father omnipotent? By Christ were all things created. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work; whatsoever things he doth, these also doth the Son likewise."§ Is God omniscient? So is Christ. "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." "All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and the hearts."|| Is God omnipresent? So is Christ. "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."** Is God immutable? So is Christ. "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."††

God says, "I, even I am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:" yet Christ says, "and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;"‡‡ and the testimony concerning Christ is, that "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."§§ Jehovah says, "be-

* Phil. 2: 10 11. † Rev. 1: 8, 18. ‡ John, 10: 18, 28. § John, 5: 19. || Rev. 2: 23. John, 2, 25. ** Mat. 28: 20. †† Heb. 13: 8.
‡‡ John, 12: 32. ib. 3: 14, 15. §§ Acts, 4: 12.

hold, I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out;" and yet Christ came, as a good shepherd, "to seek and save that which was lost, to give his life for the sheep."*

Or, is it written, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart? He that hateth *me*, hateth my father also. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha."† If we are required to walk in the commands of God, so is it equally our duty to follow in the steps of Christ. If in all we do, we should *do all to the glory of God*, so is it said, that "whosoever giveth a cup of cold water in the name of Christ, shall not lose his reward." If we are "created again in righteousness and true holiness after the image of God," it is because we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. Did the Apostles *baptize in the name of the Father*? So did they also in the name of *the Son*. Did they pronounce a benediction? the name of Christ was invariably joined with that of God. Had they *fellowship with the Father*? it was also with *his Son Jesus Christ*.

And why should we adduce further evidence of Christ's equality with the Father? You admit that the dead both small and great shall stand before *God*; that every man shall give account of himself unto *God*; but is it not as plainly written that we "must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ? that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement to the Son?" You admit that "God will rain upon the wicked, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest;" that "they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;" but is it not Jesus Christ who will say, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire?" You admit, that in the presence of God in heaven, *there is fulness of joy*; but is it not equally plain, that Christ himself constitutes heaven; that all future happiness consists in *being with himself*, being *like Christ*, *beholding his glory*? Nay; we feel bound to remember with awful solemnity, the declaration which was made to Israel of old: *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*; but must we not now receive with equal veneration the testimony of Jesus, **I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE.**

Is He not named with the same name? having, too, the same omniscient mind—the same immensity of essence—

* Luke, 19: 10. John, 10: 11, 15

† John, 15: 23, 1 Cor. 16: 22

the same immutability of purpose,—the same Almighty power,—the same unerring wisdom;—clothed with the same garments of light and beauty—the same uncreated, unbounded, undivided, unrivalled glory?

Well, has God commanded, that “all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” Well, has Christ declared, “he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father.”*

The mystery is now unravelled. It is no wonder, that the Israelites were commanded to reverence the *Angel Jehovah*; and that all holy men of old should have rejoiced in the anticipated advent of a *Saviour, who is Christ the Lord*. No wonder, that when God “brought in the first-begotten into the world,” he said, “Let all the angels of God worship him.”—No wonder, that John “heard the voice of many angels round about the throne; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousand of thousands, saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

And may any man, then—*dare* we refuse to honour *Him whom God hath so highly exalted*? Can any one decline so reasonable, so proper a service? O, no! *Unto Him that loved us, and gave himself for us, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever*. This, O Christian, is not a man, nor any creature, but *the true God and eternal life*—the GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR, Jesus Christ.

To apply to the Holy Ghost a course of reasoning similar to that which we have pursued, it might be shown that the Scriptural idea of God involves that of *Triunity*; but confining our view to the bearing of our argument on Jesus Christ, it necessarily follows that *HE IS GOD*.

Can we lawfully worship any being beside God? But it is written, that *all men should honour the Son EVEN AS they honour the Father*. Should we give supreme love, unreserved obedience to any one but God? these very af-

* John, 5: 23.

fections and duties are enjoined on us toward Jesus Christ. Do we live and move, and have our being in God alone? but Christ has said that *without me ye can do nothing*. Is it written, *he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord?* but an inspired apostle exclaimed, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ*. Can we safely commit ourselves into any other hands than God's? but Stephen and Paul both committed their souls to Christ, and we are enjoined to do the same. Does it behoove a creature to trust in any being short of God? *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm*; yet we are exhorted to believe and trust in Christ: *ye believe in God, believe also in me*. Hath any man seen God at any time? *No man*, saith the Scripture; *yet the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*. *No man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom he will reveal him*. If God has imposed on our obedience a law which we have violated, who but God can pardon us? *None can forgive sins but God only*; yet Christ forgave sins, and in his own name. Who is it that searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men? *I, the Lord*;—*yet Christ knew the hearts of all men*. *Do not I fill heaven and earth saith, the Lord?* yet Christ is every where present. Do not the Scriptures assert that *he that built all things is God?* but the same record declares, that by Christ *were all things created*. Nay; the Scriptures give to Christ the appellation of *God*; and what can be understood by these titles but that Christ is the same in essence and perfections with the Father. Has God given his own name to a creature? *I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another*. The Scriptures entitle him the *only begotten of the Father*; and what does the generation of the Son import, but that he is no less of the very same specific essential nature with the Father, than a mortal son is of the very same specific essential nature with a mortal father. Hence, as a mortal son, by being of the same essential nature with a mortal father, is a *man*, as contradistinguished from any other animal, so the Divine Son, by being of the same essential nature with his Father, must needs be *God*, as contradistinguished from any other intellectual being.*

* Vide Faber, on the eternal personality of the Word. Ho. Mos. vol. 2, p. 162.

But it is inquired, how can Christ be God without contradicting the Divine Unity? If a question altogether irrelevant (where we are concerned not with the nature of things but with facts alone,) must be answered—I am not backward to acknowledge my ignorance; and here, I am content to be ignorant. God has already communicated to me a fact which I could have ascertained from no other source; and as He has not revealed the mode of his existence, it is not necessary for me to know: nor, perhaps, was it possible to reveal this mode. We are finite; and how could we be made to grasp Infinity? All the knowledge we now have of God has been conveyed to us through sensible imagery; and by what simile drawn from any object above, beneath, or around us, all of which are necessarily derived and dependent, could Inspiration have illustrated the mode of existence in that Being who is uncreated, infinite, and eternal?

But are we to believe what we cannot understand? This is not necessary. I understand distinctly the propositions that God is numerically one in essence and perfections; that there is a distinction in the Godhead which affords ground for the respective appellations, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, have, as far as revealed to us, numerically the same essence and perfections. This distinction constitutes a foundation for the application of the personal pronouns, I, Thou, He. It is susceptible of ample proof from Revelation; and I believe that such a distinction exists in the Deity, simply because I believe that the Scriptures reveal the fact. It is one thing to understand the nature of a fact, and distinctly another to understand and accredit a proposition which involves that fact.

It is inquired, however, whether we can comprehend this distinction in the Godhead consistently with the divine unity? I cannot even comprehend the distinction itself.

The Scriptures convey to us only a negative idea. They justify us in the belief that it is neither a distinction of attributes, nor in the modes and relations of the divine actions, nor in any relation which the divine attributes may bear to one another; but what this distinction is, our knowledge will not enable us to affirm. I can understand that God may be one in one respect, and three in another; just as I can understand that man is one in one respect, and two in

another ; or that a triangle is one in one sense, and three in another. In regard to God, I understand, there is a numerical unity ;—in regard to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I understand there is a threefold distinction ; and what if we cannot understand the *nature of this distinction*, is it not enough to know the revealed fact ?

Ah, vain man ! Can you tell, how God could have existed uncaused—without beginning ? Can you define unde-rived existence ? and yet you believe in the fact that the existence of the Almighty is without cause ! Why, then, reject the fact that there is a real distinction in the God-head ?

But can you tell me what the divine unity is ? We have no proof of the divine unity independently of Revelation ; and the Scriptures, instead of metaphysically defining it, simply affirm it, and only in opposition to the polytheism* of the heathen world. How, then, can you give me a positive idea of unity—not in a creature, for that is personal ; but in an Infinite and Uncreated Nature ? According to Plato, that unity which must be the foundation of all being, is itself, of all things, the most mysterious and incomprehensible.† Why, then, reject the fact of a distinction in the Godhead, because it cannot be affirmatively defined, when we cannot affirmatively define the divine unity, and yet believe it to be a fact. If we do not know in what the divine unity consists, we may not affirm that a distinction, the nature of which we are equally ignorant, is incompatible with that unity ; and surely if any one admit the divine unity on the testimony of Revelation, (and how can it be proved from the light of nature?‡) he cannot consistently reject the *equality of the Son with the Father*—a doctrine which is asserted or implied in more passages of Scripture than even the divine unity.

We are not reluctant, then, to admit that this distinction is indefinable. It is one of the sublime mysteries of our holy religion ; and if we cannot comprehend the mystery of our own mental and physical constitution, shall we reject the truth of God, because we cannot comprehend his own

* Euseb. Ecc. Theol., lib. i. c. 2.

† Vide the Parmenides.

‡ That uniformity of design which has induced on many minds the suggestion of one author of nature, is no conclusive argument. A group of figures cut from one stone, and united in one plan, would seem to be the work and contrivance of one statuary ; and yet the statue of Laocoon, (as we learn from Pliny) was the work of *three* artists.

trinal unity? That this doctrine is above the reach of the human understanding, we readily grant; but that it is contrary to true reason cannot be proved, not only because we do not know in what this distinction, or in what the divine unity consists, but because it is not unsupported by Scriptural evidence. That alone is contrary to reason, not which clashes with our preconceived opinions and shallow reasonings, but which is opposed by the truths and facts of revelation. It may be contrary to the understanding, as the Newtonian system is opposed to the Platonic, and yet be in perfect agreement with right reason.

But for what are we contending? that Christ is truly divine? Has his divinity been a rock of offence to the pride of the philosophic mind? Amazing infatuation!

Is it not CONTRARY TO REASON that *Christ should not be the same in essence and perfections with the Father?* By Christ *were all things created*; but creative power is exclusively the attribute of the Supreme Being. The Scriptures every where appeal to creative power as the prerogative of the true God; and Jehovah himself says, *the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.*

We are, therefore, reduced to the necessity of believing that Christ is very God; or to the absurdity of supposing that God can delegate his own absolute, supreme, omnipotent and omniscient attributes to an inferiour and subordinate being. What! was this stupendous universe called into existence by a mere creature? Is it a mere creature who has redeemed a world from eternal ruin? A mere creature, who is now invested with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was?—A mere creature, who will call to life all the myriads of the dead?—A mere creature, who will change our vile body into the likeness of his own glorious body?—A mere creature, before whom we must all stand in judgement; and who is qualified by omniscience and omnipotence to render to every man according to his works?—Tell me not of difficulties in the Trinitarian Faith.—Such, are some of the absurdities into which men fall, who will be wise above what is written! For ourself, we prefer to believe what is above reason, than by rejecting the absolute Divinity of Jesus Christ, to believe what is contrary to sense.

If Christ, however, be not truly divine, the Scriptures

are exposed to fearful impeachment. I. We have no evidence from Revelation that a God exists.

What is it that enters into our conception of God, but self-existence, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence? Now, all these attributes belong to the Son; and if they do not prove that He is God, neither do they prove that the Father is God.

I look at the universe through the glass of Inspired Writ; and if I cannot see in it the traces of Christ's almighty power and infinite skill, then, is it without a divine Creator. I think of that law which has been imposed on man's obedience; and if I cannot see in Christ, infinite purity, justice and goodness, then, there is no all-perfect being. I look forward to the scenes which shall close this world's history; and if I cannot recognise in *that voice* which calls forth all the dead from their graves, *the voice of a God*;—in *that eye* which lights up in each heart of that countless throng a clear and searching day, *the omniscience of a God*—in *that hand* which instantaneously separates the wicked from the righteous, and drives them far away from his presence into a prison-house of eternal wo, *the omnipotent justice of a God*, then, we are not amenable to God's tribunal. Yes; if we are without Christ, we are emphatically *without God in the world*, and we approach a grave without a resurrection!

To demonstrate, however, the validity of our inference, we might recall those numerous and various passages of Scripture in which the divinity of Christ is either asserted, or obviously implied; but it is altogether unnecessary. One single passage, fairly interpreted, is as obligatory on our faith as a thousand. Does any one Scriptural text affirm the divinity of the Son? How came it here, if this volume be given by the inspiration of God? Is it necessary that a law should be again and again promulgated before it can be binding? Must God reiterate a declaration before we are bound to believe? For my own part, if the Scriptures be of divine authority, I see the divinity of the Son as plainly in the first verses of John's Gospel, as any where else the revealed attributes of a God. Examine these passages: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

All here is positive affirmation; and of what are we as-

sured?—That the Logos,* or Word of God *who was made flesh and dwelt among us*, was in the beginning; already was, and did exist before the creation;—that before the creation, he was partaker of the divine glory and happiness; that he was God—the same in essence and perfections as the Father; that all things were made by him, and that nothing was made without him.

After such an introduction, it was scarcely necessary for St. John to assure us—*these things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name*. We perceive at once, the scope and design of his writings; and we are not surprised, that several centuries after, he was accused by the Apostate Julian, of having *invented the doctrine of Christ's divinity*! Still less, is it a matter of wonder, that the modern Socinian, after vainly attempting to invalidate the genuineness of the text, brings it down to the level of his system, by translating the passage into nonsense.

But look at the entire Scriptures. Wherever in the Old Testament there is an allusion to the Word, it is the Angel Jehovah; or to the Messiah, his divine nature is explicitly foretold. It was *the way of Jehovah, a high-way for our God*, which John Baptist was sent to prepare. It was the *Mighty God* that should be born unto us. It was *Jehovah of Hosts* who should be a stone of stumbling unto both the houses of Israel. It was *to God* that every knee should bow; and *in Jehovah* that all the seed of Israel should be justified and make their boast.

And if we see God in the gospel, it is because we see Jesus Christ. If God shine into our minds with the light of

* If the Angel Jehovah were the Word, then the Word is God, for the Angel is unequivocally pronounced to be the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. (See Gen. 32: 24-31, 48: 15, 16.) Now, that the Angel Jehovah was the same person as the Word of God, and that the Word of God was the promised Messiah, were the opinions both of the ancient Targumists and of the primitive Fathers. (See Jameson's Vindic., book i., c. 5.) So far from having borrowed the term *Logos* from Plato or Philo, Justin Martyn expressly declares that he derived it from the Scriptures. (See Dial cum Tryph., p. 279. Apol. ii., p. 75.) John, therefore, merely uses a title which occurs in the Old Testament, and interpreting his phraseology by the language of his nation, we cannot but conclude, that by declaring Christ to be the Word, he designed to teach the Jews that the Word incarnate in the person of the man Christ, is the identical anthropomorphic Angel-God of the Patriarchal and Levitical dispensations.

the knowledge of the glory of himself, it is *in the face of Jesus Christ*. If we have access unto God, it is *through Jesus Christ*. If our prayers prevail with God, it is when they are offered in the *name of Christ*. If we are baptized into the name of God, it is because we are *baptized into Christ*—the Apostles using the phrase baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, as equivalent to baptism into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and with what propriety, I ask, if not, that *in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*.

Who is it that we have here in the gospel, but Emmanuel,* *God with us* or *God visibly dwelling among us in a human form*. Whose love do we hereby perceive? *The love of God, because he laid down his life for us*. For what hath the gospel given us an understanding? That we may *know him that is true*, for this is the *true God* and eternal life. What is the *great mystery of Godliness*? *God manifest in the flesh*. Whose Church is this? *The Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood*. For whose appearing are we looking? *The Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. *Who is over all blessed for ever*? *Jesus Christ who came in the flesh*.

If Christ, then, notwithstanding such a variety and fulness of evidence, be not truly divine, may we not consistently regard the Scriptures as revealing neither the names, the attributes, nor the works of an uncreated being?

II. As a further consequence of the Son's not being the same in essence and perfections with the Father, the Scriptures sanction idolatry. That they have produced the wide-spread conviction that Christ is God, cannot be denied. We need not to be pointed to the multitude of errors which sprung up during the dark ages—the Apostles and primitive martyrs worshipped Christ. They placed in him their supreme affections; they looked to him for grace; they appealed to his omniscience; they grasped his promises. Paul addressed his epistles to all who *invoke the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* in every place. According

* Christ was not familiarly known by this appellation; but according to the Hebrew idiom, when a person is called by a significant name which literally he never bore, the import is, that the name in question merely describes his character and office.—Hence, the meaning of Emmanuel as applied to Christ, is that in point of character he should be, what the name actually signifies.

to the testimony of Pliny, the distinguishing characteristic of the early Christians was, that they *sung hymns unto Christ as unto a God*. And to whom did Stephen commit his departing spirit, but unto the Lord Jesus? And what is the song which the Church militant has sung, but that which is echoed by the Church triumphant? *Unto him that loved us and gave himself for us, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, unto him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

It is impossible that such should not have the effect of a system which places Christ in an attitude so unrivalled—the disinterested friend of a ruined race, offering up himself a sacrifice to divine justice; Redeemer, King, crowned with the name, and invested with the attributes of Jehovah. In the absence of Revelation, it is no matter of surprise that man should bow down before the orb of day or the queen of night;—where there was an utter ignorance of the Supreme and all-perfect Being, that mortals should be apotheosised. Idolatry is the besetting sin of human nature. What, then, must we say, of the inevitable tendency of a Revelation which embodies the life and death, the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ? The spontaneous exclamation of every mind on attaining the knowledge of *such a Saviour*, is that which burst from the lips of Thomas when he identified the risen, with the crucified Jesus: *My Lord and my God!*

Now, if Christ be not truly divine, what is more obvious than that the frame-work of Christianity is delusive and deceptive? Instead of counteracting, it strengthens man's natural proneness to look to the creature. So far from having benefited, it has inflicted incalculable and irreparable evil on the world. I know we are wont to speak of its triumphs, and the many blessings which it has scattered in its march; but what though it has destroyed the thirty thousand gods of antiquity?—all these have been sacrificed to one **GRAND IDOL!** Let us mourn over the broken altars and desecrated shrines of heathen mythology, for here, is a substituted idolatry, a thousand fold more difficult to be eradicated; not indeed so gross as the ancient idolatry, but incomparably better framed for universality and permanence.

And what shall we think of the Author of this system—He who has sworn by Himself that the gospel is true? Are

not *they* misled who are most desirous of honouring God—who would sacrifice their all for His approbation? I want an Almighty Deliverer; and I am pointed to a creature.—I want a sympathizing Saviour; and I am pointed to a creature.—I want a perfect righteousness when I come before the High and Holy One; and I am pointed to a creature.—I want an all-prevailing intercessor; and I am pointed to a creature.—I want a guide through the valley of death, and through the pathless ages of eternity; and am I pointed to a creature? What! shall I commit my soul to a creature—my precious soul, to a *mere creature like myself*?

O, if such be the Saviour which Christianity reveals, it is null and void;—it is nothing worth as a religion for man, the responsible but fallen subject of moral government. Christ is truly divine; or, we are not simply idolaters, but *without hope*. Thus decides the *practical* reason* of man.

III. Unless the divinity of the Son of God be admitted, the Scriptures cannot be vindicated from the charge of inconsistency and contradiction. They attribute to a man, the works and perfections of the great God. Their professed design is to abolish idolatry, and yet, they enjoin the worship of a man! They would bring us to the knowledge of the true God, and yet require us to be baptized into the name of a creature! At one time, they speak of Christ as a man, in all respects like as we are, with the exception of sin; at another, they represent him in such a light that we cannot fail to identify him with God himself. In one place, are discovered prophecies of depressed mortality united with exalted glory; in another the names of a man with the titles of a God;—amid the frailties of a creature are to be discovered the attributes of the Creator;—with the most humiliating descriptions of manhood are blended the most

* If I am to believe in the divinity of Christ, "Revelation must have assured it, my conscience required it; or in some way or other I must have an *interest* in this belief. It must *concern* me, as a moral and responsible being. Now, these grounds were first given in the redemption of mankind by Christ, the Saviour and Mediator; and by the utter incompatibility of these offices with a mere creature. *On the doctrine of Redemption depends the faith, the duty of believing in the divinity of our Lord.* . . . The doctrine of redemption from sin, supplies the Christian with motives and reasons for the divinity of the Redeemer far more *concerning* and *coercive subjectively*, i. e. in the economy of his own soul, than are all the inducements which can influence the deist objectively, i. e. in the interpretation of nature." Coleridge's Aids to Reflection, pp. 117, 19, 20.

sublime representations of Deity. If Christ, therefore, be not truly divine, how shall we rescue the Scriptures from the inevitable charge of inconsistency? Will it be denied that these prophecies and descriptions refer to Christ? To whom can they be applied, if not to the King of Glory, who became a Man of Sorrows? By the contradiction which they seemingly involve, they identify his person. Shall we, then, expunge from the text every passage which either asserts or implies his divinity; or wresting their meaning, bring down God to the puny dimensions of a mortal? This were to do impious violence to Heaven's Revelation—to change its entire structure. There is no evading this consequence: for if we may erase one passage, and violate the original idiom in the construction of another, we might more readily preclude such unnecessary labour by rejecting the whole scheme of Revelation.

All contention on this point, has arisen, we apprehend, from the precipitate decision of first impressions. Too many have neither paused in thought, nor gone round to examine.* Are there passages which bear on His Divinity, and others which tell us that he was the man Christ Jesus? What then? Shall we deny His Divinity, and contend for his humanity? I may with equal propriety deny his humanity and maintain his divinity alone. No; let us look at both sides of the question. Who is this so glorious in his apparel, clothed in the brightness of his Father's attributes? Who can be truly divine, if not a personage who wields omnipotence, and reads all hearts, and is every where present, and knows no beginning, nor change, nor end; whom angels worship, and we are commanded to honour with supreme devotion?—And yet, he is found in fashion as a man—he sojourns with men—we see his face—we embrace his person—we hear his voice—we mark his action. He enters this house and sits down to meat; he passes on to another, and comforts the afflicted bosom; we see the tear of sympathy standing in his eye; and following him from place to place, we fail not to perceive his meekness

* The fable of an altercation which ensued between two knights, who happened from opposite quarters to meet at a statue which held on its extended arm a shield, will better serve to illustrate the nature of the controversy respecting Christ's character, than any subject to which we have seen it applied.

and condescension. We wonder at the treatment he received. He is reviled, buffeted, scourged, crucified.—How painfully the noise of the hammer strikes on our ear! He is nailed to the cross. We see the spear enter his side. He gives up the ghost. We see him wrapped in grave-clothes and laid in the sepulchre.—

True; *this was a righteous man*, and as truly may it be affirmed, *this was the Son of God!* Here, our difficulty is solved. If he were God, *he took upon himself the likeness of sinful man*; if he were man, he as certainly was *God manifest in the flesh*. **JESUS CHRIST WAS BOTH GOD AND MAN.**

“We are far from suppressing our conviction that this is a great mystery; we rejoice, on the contrary, in its incomprehensibility; we delight to lose ourselves in the impenetrable shades which invest the subject; because in the darkness and cloud which envelope it, God dwells. It is the greatness which forms the mystery of the fact. It could only be brought within the sphere of our comprehension by a contraction of its vast dimensions, by a depression of its native grandeur!”* And nothing short of this mysterious union of the divine and human in the constitution of the Messiah's person, can reconcile passages which are otherwise diametrically at issue. It is the only possible view of Christ which can secure to the Scriptures any valid claims for consistency; and may it not be added, that by their delineation of Christ as perfect God and perfect man, they have presented us, in this miracle of portraiture, a demonstration of Christianity, more complete than could be conceived by the finite mind.

On the supposition of Christ's mere humanity, it might also be shown that the Scriptures are devoid of all significance of meaning.

IV. But if Christ were not God as well as man, a still more revolting inference is resistlessly obtruded on our convictions—he was an impostor. What was his answer to the Jews who on one occasion thronged him and said, *how long dost thou make us to doubt? if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly*. **I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE**, was his deliberate reply. The Jews were consequently filled with indignation, and took up stones to stone him. Christ expos-

* Robert Hall's Works, vol. iii., p. 318.

tulated with them ; but in these very words they made answer : *For a good work we stoned thee not, but FOR BLASPHEMY, because that thou, BEING A MAN, MAKEST THYSELF GOD.* Jesus answered them : *If ye called them gods unto whom the word of God came, (and the Scriptures cannot be broken,) say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou BLASPHEMEST, because I SAID I AM THE SON OF GOD.* Our modern Socinians are perfectly satisfied with this explanation ; but the Jews were not. Perceiving, though Christ argued from the less to the greater, that he did not speak of himself as being an official god, as Moses and others were styled gods ; and knowing that both in the judgement of Christ, and in the apprehension of their nation, the two phrases, *I and my Father are one*, and *I am the Son of God*, were equipollent, they THEREFORE sought again to take him—being the more exasperated against him for his very defence. To adopt any other explanation, is at once to exhibit Christ as saying what he never did say, and to preclude the possibility of accounting for the conduct of the Jews on any rational principles.

Take another instance. *Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us ;* and what was Christ's answer ? *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou, Show us the Father ?*

What was his answer to the High Priest who adjured him by the living God that he would tell him whether he were the Son of God ? He had now an opportunity for correcting any erroneous impressions ; by a simple negative to the High Priest, he might have escaped the agonies and ignominy of crucifixion. But mark ! On his own calm, deliberate reply, the charge of blasphemy which had pursued him throughout his ministry, was now confirmed. "The High Priest rent his garments, saying : He hath spoken blasphemy ; what farther need have we of witnesses ? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye ? They answered and said, he is guilty of death." They put him to death, therefore, on the ground of *this blasphemy*, that he being a man, had made himself God ; "for we have a law," said the Jews, "and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

We are reduced, consequently, to this dilemma—either
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that Christ *regarded himself* as one with God; or, that he *wilfully deceived* the people; either he was God manifest in the flesh; or, he was justly put to death—died justly as a blasphemer and an impostor!

To invalidate this conclusion, we know it may be said, that if truly divine, Christ might have given indisputable and resistless evidences of his divinity; but the answer is at hand, and in the words of Inspiration: "Had the princes of this world known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." Had they known, it could not have been by our Saviour's indirect intimations, or by any verbal assertions: nothing short of some real exhibition of that majesty and power which essentially belong to Deity could have convinced their minds; and thus by restraining the Jews from putting him to death, he would have precluded the object of his incarnation—"to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

What more is needed to the conclusion of our argument? Will it be said, there is no evidence that he did not die a blasphemer? Look a little beyond the period of his death. *In the face of his accusation and condemnation as a blasphemer, on the third day he rose from the dead!* By what possible means, can conviction be forced on us, if we do not see in the fact of Christ's resurrection, the highest degree of evidence, that he had an inherent right to the divine character which he had previously assumed.

But observe him afterwards.—He suffers divine homage to be paid to him; he commends the faith of his worshippers; he reproved Thomas for his *unbelief*, but he did not for the idolatry of his exclamation, *my Lord and my God*. Was this like one who knew that he was nothing more than a man? If he were not God, was it *honest*? On this principle, his Apostles were far more honest than their Master; for when Paul and Barnabas were taken for gods, *they restrained* the people. When Cornelius fell down at his feet and worshipped him, Peter forbade him, saying, "Stand up, I myself am a man." When John fell down before the angel in the Apocalypse, "See thou do it not, I am a fellow-servant with thee, and with thy brethren who bear testimony of Jesus,—**worship God.**"

Nay; if Christ be not God, in what light shall we regard the Apostles? *Themselves* worshipped Christ—they commanded others to worship him; and in proof of his divinity

applied to Christ various passages from the prophets which bespeak the character of the Supreme God. In addressing the Galatians, Paul styled him an apostle, i. e. *one sent*, not *from man* nor *by man*, but *by Jesus Christ*. If, therefore, the Son be not essentially one with the Father, must we not look on the Apostles, not as having taught us the truth, but by their impious application of prophecies, as having betrayed us into idolatry. They were either deceivers; or they did not understand the prophets; or the prophets did not predict a Messiah. Where, then, is the evidence of inspiration? What is this which we call the Bible? "Where the Alternative lies between the Absurd and the Incomprehensible, no wise man can be at a loss which of the two to prefer."

It remains with us, then, whether to reject the Scriptures as a Revelation from Heaven, or to admit the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The only choice which is left us is, either to believe that God *was* manifest in the flesh; or to believe—nothing! Hence it is, that Infidelity begins by assailing the absolute Divinity of Christ: it is first admitted with certain modifications; then, Christ is rapidly degraded from his supreme dignity to an emanation, and then to a mere creature, and then to a mere man, and with the last blow at his divinity is lost all respect for Inspiration;* and thus, the mind has often passed through the various descending stages of error until it has lost all peace with all vision in the blackness of darkness for ever.

It has been our endeavour, consequently, to afford a glimpse of the arguments by which this doctrine is supported. We may have failed to present it in its strongest light, or to relieve it from all its difficulties. Let it be granted, that our powers are inadequate to the task which we have essayed; still, the interests of the doctrine we have aimed to exhibit, cannot be impaired by the imbecility of its advocate.—Engraven on the tablet of Eternal Truth, it scorns our aid, as it defies our opposition. Yes; Christ is **ALL AND IN ALL**. By the doctrine of his **INCARNATE DIVINITY**, stands or falls the whole fabric of the gospel—on it, our everlasting destiny!

* The truth of this might be illustrated by the case of Dr. Priestly.—For a sketch of his career in error, see Douglas's *Errors regarding Religion*, p. 165.

There are some, however, who may not be attracted by this discussion. What is it to the thoughtless worldling, whether Christ be God, or whether Christ have died? He cares for none of these things. Sporting himself with his own deceivings, he may sleep on until the clangor of the trump announces the tremendous fact, that *the great day of His wrath is come.*

But it is otherwise with the anxious sinner. *He* feels that he is lost and wretched, and where shall he look? that he is the object of God's wrath, and in what shall he find a covert from the storm? that he is doomed to death, and who shall be to him the resurrection and the life? that he is guilty and polluted, and who shall wash away his stains and fit him for a holy heaven? Will you point him to a man, or to any creature? Mock not the anguish of his feelings. Hark! does he not call loudly for a rescue? Is he not sinking beneath the curse of a *holy law*? And who amid the rank of creatures* can take away sin by meritorious obedience—can endure the wrath of omnipotence—can lay his hand on a holy God and on sinful man—can close the mouth of the pit—can open to him immortality, and prepare him to stand before God? But why so vain a question? Already has he felt the vanity of the creature; and as he beholds in Christ the blending yet softened attributes of a God, O! with what confidence and joy does he exclaim, *To whom, Lord, shall I go but unto thee?* THOU ALONE HAST THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

What is the value of this doctrine, then, to the experienced Christian? Take away his divine Saviour, and you

* Remove for him, (the practical inquirer,) the difficulties and objections which oppose or perplex his belief of a crucified Saviour; convince him of the reality of sin, which is impossible without a knowledge of its true nature and consequences; and then satisfy him as to the fact historically and as to the truth spiritually, of a redemption therefrom by Christ; do this for him, and there is little fear that he will permit either logical quirks or metaphysical puzzles to contravene the plain dictates of common sense—the *Sinless One that redeemed mankind from sin, must have been more than man.*"—Aids to Reflection, p. 157. We have thus, again, endeavoured to corroborate our views by some appropriate quotation from Coleridge; and if apology be necessary for having repeatedly alluded to this writer, it will be found not only in our blending sentiments of admiration and respect for his intellect, but in the fact that he whose reasonings are so conclusive on the subject of Christ's divinity, was in the early part of his public life a *Unitarian Minister*. Vide Hazlitt's Literary Remains, p. 279—in connexion with Lamb's Works, vol. i., p. 20.

have rifled his heart! Whither, ah! whither shall he go? It is not for him to be just before God; it is not for him to lift up even his eyes to heaven. Without a sacrifice for sin; without a medium of access—without an intercessor on High, he mourns in solitude over the wreck of hope which was radiant with immortality;—he is tossed on an ocean of doubt, and darkness, and despair;—he lives, he dies, the conscious victim of *God's wrath and curse!*

ART. VII. THOUGHTS ON THE NEW-HAVEN THEOLOGY.

By the EDITOR.

WHENEVER any serious error has been introduced to the Church, a long previous process has been found necessary to prepare the public mind for its reception. A torrent of ridicule has been poured upon those who have been disposed to contend for the truth: a firm attachment to one's sentiments has been denounced as bigotry: an indolent indifference to all opinions extolled as the mark of a noble and ingenuous mind. In communities where error has prepared for a triumph, no vice whatever is censured with such zeal and warmth as that charity which rejoiceth in the truth, and no virtue, however pure, so highly extolled as that counterfeit charity which denies or betrays it. The advocates of new doctrines are aware that if they efface from men's minds all respect for truth, the passions alone will secure the admission of error, and the multitude is at last brought to consider it of little consequence what they believe; to place truth and error on the same level, and, as to all practical purposes, to confound them.

In communities where the word of God continues to be honoured, revealed truth is regarded one of the greatest gifts which God has bestowed on mankind. Numerous martyrs have demonstrated to the world that they regarded it as dearer than life, and all the truly wise prize it beyond all

worldly good. They have spared no labour nor study to obtain it ; they have sacrificed their pride of reason, their preconceived opinions and their dearest inclinations to embrace it. But now we begin to be told that it is no matter whether we have it or not ; that it is bigotry to suppose that we have it ; that it is the very height of presumption to believe in our belief, or to suppose that the opposite can be error. The very essence of charity is made to consist in believing all others to be right, and it seems now to be a settled policy to divide truth equally among opposing denominations. The pretended mother who came to Solomon, seemed to make a very equitable proposal ; she desired that, as the child was claimed by both parties, it might be cut in two and divided equally between them ; but the unnatural offer detected the falseness of her claims. And so it is at the present day. Cut truth in two, divide it any way, you cannot fail to suit them. Men cheerfully part with that which they have ceased to value. We may readily form an estimate of the motives which have animated these innovators in their search after truth, when they begin by attempting to confound the distinction between truth and error, and assure us that the opinions they would introduce are no more important than those they would supplant. Themselves being judges, neither they nor their opinions are entitled to a hearing.

Notwithstanding all the artifice, ambiguity, apparent retractions and real contradictions with which errorists introduce their opinions, they are sure to be suspected, to be detected by a few, and to become the subject of censure ; and every artifice is put in requisition to turn the honest warnings of the friends of truth against themselves ; and to shelter these innovators, they are represented as the objects of a cruel persecution ; the orthodox are stigmatised as bigoted, cruel, ambitious, and vindictive. Great efforts are making at present to enlist sympathy for a certain class, and excite odium against the friends of what has hitherto been regarded as truth. Now we appeal to any man whether his sympathies are due to those who reverence the word of God, or to those who he believes would corrupt it : whether as a member of Christ he should feel sympathy for his suffering members, whom error would delude, or for those who would delude them ; whether he should have his compassion direct-

ed towards those immortal beings who will feel the effects of this error through eternity, or to those who would undo them?

We shall notice the inventors and abettors of the new doctrines only as the propagators of what we believe to be dangerous error; we are willing to concede to them all, and even more than their friends would be ready to claim for them; but still, whatever be the dignity, talents, or learning of those who would withdraw us from the truth, our course is plainly marked out in the word of God. "Though we," says the Apostle Paul, "though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. If there come unto you any and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed—for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Whatever a counterfeit charity may pretend, we have the authority of the Bible, that it is an evil deed to corrupt the gospel of Christ.

Even supposing that the Church had no concern with the faith of its members, and that it may innocently bid God speed to them who are bringing in another gospel, still what shall we say of the ingenuousness of those who retain their connection with a church when they have rejected its fundamental doctrines, more who maintain this connection in order to subvert these doctrines. We concede to them the right as freemen to receive and teach what they please, but we deny that they can innocently use the confidence which the Church reposes in them in order to betray it; or profess a creed in order to overthrow it; or use the power, influence, and credit which they enjoy as members and pastors in the Church in order to sap its foundations.

Christians can innocently give their countenance to those who are introducing fundamental error, only while they do it ignorantly. He that biddeth them God speed, knowing their true designs, is partaker of their evil deeds. The Church itself may extensively share the guilt and punishment of those who are introducing heresy. Bare silence alone is the most that these persons wish. Let them pursue their course of proselytism, of agitation and proscription upon those who are ignorant of their plans, unmolested, and they are sure of final success. By keeping silence only, the

Church would give them the whole weight of her authority. She would speak, and, in terms not to be misunderstood, say, that nothing is to be feared from these men. It is not necessary that the Church actually patronize such persons; she gives them actual countenance, if she do not make unceasing opposition to their works.

But it is said that before Christians can be justified in withdrawing confidence, error must have been taught and acknowledged in the most plain and unequivocal manner. Now this is precisely that which will never be done. Where truth continues to be revered, fundamental error can enter only secretly and in disguise. A plain disclosure would be its immediate ruin; it is always veiled in ambiguous language sure to be understood by the initiated, and misunderstood by the orthodox. Its abettors well know that they must use the sacred authority and influence of the Church to spread their opinions, and they have little scruple to use its confidence to undermine it. Hence they always begin by asserting that the difference is so slight, that on coming to definitions, it almost vanishes, that all alarm is groundless and ridiculous, and excited only from interested motives.

When those Pelagians who held the form of Arminianism in New-England, were preparing to introduce Socinianism into Massachusetts, did they give notice of their doings, did they themselves sound the alarm? On the contrary, the thing was conducted with such secrecy, that the defection was known in England sooner than in this country, and the news came to us only by accident, and from the other side of the Atlantic. How would any alarm have been received from the friends of truth at that time? Even after the defection had become extensive, all apprehension on the part of serious people was treated with ridicule. While Socinians were pouring ridicule and contempt upon the orthodox doctrines in one circle, asserting that none but the bigoted, ignorant, weak, and superstitious could receive such absurdities as the doctrines of the Reformation, in others they were giving assurances that the differences were slight, and mostly verbal, and that it would be criminal in the highest degree to allow them to interrupt the harmony, peace, and union which heretofore had prevailed. Doubtless every truth that is given up, is first deemed unimportant by those that surrender it. But did the Church bid them God speed, and by

countenancing them in their labours, become a partner in their guilt? No. Without the formality of a trial, or even of a citation, she did not indeed excise them from all ecclesiastical connexion, but she did more. She withdrew from their communion, and thus, as it were, passed upon them the sentence of excommunication; and justly. For the other party must have despised them yet more in their hearts had they done less. They would justly have considered them insincere either in their creed or in their professions of union, should they continue communion with those who ridiculed, despised, and blasphemed what they believed to be the gospel of Christ. So far from preserving harmony, the only feelings such an union could produce, would be suspicion on one part and contempt on the other. It could only have given a wider spread to the corruption, and made a subsequent division more extensive.

Now who was it that caused this division? Was it those who continued to maintain the gospel which both parties had held in common, or those who introduced another gospel, and required their brethren to bid them God speed in spreading it? The other party had left the orthodox no alternative but that of abusing the patronage and the authority of the Church for the dissemination of heresy, or of dissolving communion. By taking the other course, not only must they have given their influence to the spread of dangerous error, but even brought their own integrity into suspicion. What confidence could he claim, who on one occasion should teach one thing, and on another the reverse; in words that one thing was the gospel, in actions that the opposite was equally so? This course must have ruined them, and perhaps their churches.

At the present time we hear some of the great doctrines of the Reformation treated with ridicule, and accused of the most licentious tendency, and the very same persons elsewhere claiming to hold them with differences merely verbal. We hear Pelagianism advanced with some degree of boldness, and then apparently retracted and denied. We remember hearing a distinguished Unitarian clergyman remark that, in general he found little to censure in the statements of the New-Haven divines on depravity, regeneration and imputation, but when they undertake to prove their orthodoxy on these points to their brethren, we see not much to choose between them. Now to whom do men

give the most correct account of their sentiments?—to those whom they wish to instruct, or those they wish to satisfy? A system of concealment and ambiguous expression has become so common among a certain class, that we know of no surer mark that a person has received the system of Dr. Taylor, than to see him attempt to conceal his sentiments on the most important subjects under ambiguous terms. This is not the course of those who are conscious of only slight verbal differences. We commonly see these persons professing to regard the new system with decided disapprobation, but after an explanation of their ambiguous terms has been insisted on, avowing its fundamental principles. Now is this the course of those who have attained to new and important truths, such as they know will bless mankind. Is this the conduct of those who value truth beyond all things else, who are ready to become martyrs in its defence and extension? Does it not more resemble the skulking instinct of the vermin who clings to his hole, and steadily resists with all its strength, every attempt to pull him from his chosen concealment? What shall we say of the pretensions of those who conceal what they call the most valuable discoveries, discoveries which are instantly to change the face of the Church and regenerate the world? And what opinion shall we entertain of those truths of which the abettors are generally ashamed, which they conceal, and are willing to have pass for the opposite errors?

It is less owing to the prevalence of heresy, than to this system of concealment, that confidence is so generally impaired. When ordinary conversation, creeds, and the most solemn instruments are no longer able to bind men, there must ensue a general distrust. When men have been accustomed to use language, creeds and the most solemn compacts, all in which we have been accustomed to place confidence, not to express their opinions, but to conceal them, they have nothing left by which to regain confidence; and it is out of our power to bestow it.

Now we say we believe that the differences which prevail at the present time in the Church are fundamental. The great doctrines of native depravity and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, as they have always been understood; truths which lie at the foundation of all the great doctrines of grace are not barely denied, but held up to public odium and detestation. We see men assailing them with ridicule,

and charging them with all the consequences which infidels have always endeavoured to fix upon them ; and these truths never have met so severe treatment from unbelievers as they now experience in the Church. And shall we decide with these persons, and accuse the Church since the Reformation, of teaching the most pernicious errors, and justify Socinians and infidels in all their cruel charges which they have brought against these opinions and those who profess them. If human nature is labouring under only a slight wound, one which it gives itself, and which, with sufficient persuasion it can be induced to cure, if we can be convinced of this, we will be the first to rejoice, and will retract every charge. But till then, when we hear men denying that grace which alone makes them Christians, denying the existence and even possibility of that depravity which alone makes grace necessary, whoever they may be, we will raise our voice against them ; we will not call that a slight and unimportant difference which undermines the whole gospel system. The Catholic Church had not gone so far as to deny man's native depravity, and regeneration by the special influences of the Holy Spirit, when the Reformers thought themselves justified in a separation ; and shall we pronounce that those who reject these fundamental doctrines, without which the others have no meaning, shall we say they have renounced nothing important, and differ from us only in trifles ?

But it is said that both parties agree in the facts, though they use different terms to express them. Now we know that the reverse of this is true ; there is an apparent agreement in words, but the facts are denied by those of the New-Haven school as warmly as by Socinians. Experimental religion is wholly swept away by this system ; all the divine precepts relating to the affections are explained in accordance with the new philosophy, and the Christian graces are subjected to a crafty analysis till they vanish. We believe, that the system utterly excludes truth from the doctrines, and holiness from the precepts of the Bible. We regard it, when stripped of its ambiguous language, as little less at variance with spiritual religion than Socinianism.

We know it is said that it is not a new gospel, but only a new way of presenting the old one so as to make it efficacious. Now had the success of the gospel depended, not on the influences of the Holy Spirit, but on a mysterious way

of presenting it, we think it more probable that God would have communicated this method of making it efficacious to his inspired apostles, than wait eighteen hundred years for the sagacity of Doctors Beecher and Taylor to discover it.

For a time the advocates of this scheme were ready to rest the proof of its truth on its wonderful success, and this alone carried great numbers into the belief of it: would they be content to rest it there now? As soon as the system of deception connected with new measures was discovered, and men began to find out what was really meant by its orthodox terms, and what was really intended by natural ability, change of preference, &c., it was found to be a most powerless system; and we perceive that many who were carried away by its apparent success, and that system of proscription by which it was introduced, are beginning to review their conclusions and return to the truth; and we have no doubt that many of the young who have been led astray by its high pretensions, when they shall learn what the doctrines are which they have been taught to despise, will yet embrace them. We believe that but a small part of those who have given these opinions their patronage, are yet satisfied of their truth, and that many are becoming startled in tracing them out to their consequences.

Now we believe that the great success which seemed to attend these doctrines, which was so confidently pleaded as evidence of their truth, and being an attestation of heaven in their favour, we regard this success, these innumerable spurious conversions as demonstration that these doctrines are false and ruinous. In these religious excitements which have been so prevalent these few years past, the great truths of the gospel have been kept mostly out of sight—the nature of repentance and faith, the nature and evidences of regeneration have been dwelt on only in the most superficial manner, when at all—every thing was resolved into a singular submission which was only very vaguely defined; and what could have been expected from such a course? Even in times when divines have used all pains to describe true religion, and excite to self-examination, spurious conversions have been very frequent. But here it would seem as if the whole business was to drive people forward in the dark, and put them in such a state of excitement as would be likely to produce a hope in minds eager to entertain one; it seemed to be the object rather to persuade persons that they were Chris-

tians, than to make them such. The preaching had all the influence of fundamental heresy. In some places, not one half, in some not one fifth, in others not one tenth of the pretended converts had the decency to preserve even the form of godliness for a few months only. We hear Mr. Finney himself asserting that the great body of converts for the last ten years have been a disgrace to religion, and no man has had a better opportunity than he to form an opinion of those among whom he has laboured. Mr. Spencer, we have been informed on the best authority, has gone from place to place, and directed his labours to the Church, and attempted to reconvert them. And what wonder? what have always been defined and called the special influences of the Spirit have been denied. By giving up the doctrine of innate depravity, they have dispensed with the necessity for any but the common influences of the Holy Spirit, which are confined to the understanding and conscience.

The results of these most numerous excitements which have been blazoned in our religious newspapers, are now before the public, and we have no hesitation in asserting, that the orthodox in this country have lost all confidence in these accounts, and abroad that revivals have been brought into general disrepute. Those who feel for the honour of religion, and the welfare of immortal souls, dread nothing so much as to hear these flaming recitals, which appear in some of our newspapers so palpably set forth for party effect. We never remember to have heard Socinians venture on charges against former revivals one half so serious as are now universally acknowledged to be good against our present excitements.

But those false converts were examined by ministers and others, and pronounced Christians; they honestly supposed themselves such: they were told what constitutes conversion, all fears of self-deception were ridiculed, and even put down as evidence of being still unrenewed. And according to the views of religion presented they were converted; and they will continue to believe it, notwithstanding all their back-slidings; and now you can persuade them to renounce neither their hopes nor their sins.

Opposers of religion now think they have seen a demonstration that there is nothing real in it: infidels boast that it is proved that religion can produce no radical change in the human mind. These excitements have furnished them, in

these false converts, with arguments more powerful than any that they can draw from books; arguments which are always in the sight of all, walking, speaking, acting arguments, ever at hand, to be found in every part of the country; and arguments which it seems impossible to answer. But this is very far from being the end of the evil. Who is not aware that the Church has been almost revolutionized within four or five years, by means of such excitements?

The Church has received into her bosom those who respect neither her doctrines or institutions, and must long feel the consequences of it.

Now have the fruits of these revivals where the new doctrines have been preached, been such that we dare attribute them to the Spirit of God? Dare we, by mere silence, give currency to such an opinion? Is it not our duty publicly to disclaim it? Christians have been discouraged, infidels emboldened—revivals brought into disrepute at home and abroad, all spiritual religion has been brought into suspicion by those successes which we were told demonstrated the truth and efficacy of the new system. We never believed that God had granted to fundamental error a success greater than ever he had put on his own truth; we agreed with the other party in regarding these as the pure results of man's measures and man's doctrines, but we did not regard them as the work of God. And we believe that the great reproach brought on revivals and serious religion, can be removed only by Christians, giving a united testimony against that system of measures and strain of preaching which have loaded them with these imputations. This we believe might do much to accomplish the end. To unite with those who have been producing such results, and who still defend them in the same course of action, could serve only to destroy the influence of truth and of those who preach it. The motives of those who are labouring for such union, we regard as interested and criminal in the highest degree. We see the most conclusive evidence that there is a settled policy to make these excitements an engine for party purposes.

Notwithstanding all the pretences that the differences are slight, and such as ought not to separate brethren, there are two parties who, with opposing sentiments on fundamental points, can never be united; or rather there is one denomi-

nation growing up within another, as hostile to it as any which can be named, and the union is desired only that the old one may minister strength and nourishment to the parasite. The parasitic larva has an eager desire of continued union with the larva which has had the misfortune to bring him into life; he nourishes himself from his substance, and with instinctive tenderness forbears to touch a vital part till he has acquired growth and strength, and the source of nourishment is exhausted.

We see the same acts of dissembling and concealing their sentiments every where resorted to; a general understanding in all parts of the country; an active and unwearied spirit of proselytism; a discipline the most exact and rigorous pervading all ranks: we see the orthodox acting without plan, union, or concert, and so unsuspicious that they were not alarmed till nearly the whole weekly religious press had thrown their influence against them. We have scarce conversed with an intelligent individual of the orthodox party who has not expressed the opinion that there is a settled policy of the other party to displace their opponents from every important position in the Church. An influential individual in the Presbyterian Church, lately urged a gentleman in this city to exert his influence to have East Windsor unite with New-Haven in putting down the old school party in the General Assembly. We believe that Socinians and infidels never manifested a more subtle or warmer opposition against the doctrines of native depravity and regeneration, as the Church has always held these truths, than this new party. We know that there is a spirit of secret but decided hostility towards the friends of truth, and that those who have been placed in contact with them, feel less apprehension from the influence of any hostile denomination, than from those who are so loud in their praises of peace and charity. We are firmly persuaded that if the orthodox would every where speak out their sentiments of these new views of doctrinal and experimental religion, and the arts by which they are disseminated, that the danger would be mostly over; the unsuspicious would be put on their guard; thousands would be saved from heresy and delusion, and the tactics of the party rendered useless.

But this party has seen its greatest extension, and is already on the decline; the popularity both of the new

divinity and new measures have passed away together; the arts which have contributed to its increase have been extensively detected, and must now contribute almost equally to its disgrace and decline; many have witnessed its utter inefficiency, when disconnected with new measures; many have pushed the system to its legitimate consequences, and been startled at its results; many have become dissatisfied at the tardy effects even of this new gospel in working reformatations, and have struck out plans of their own; moral reform, abolitionism, ultra temperance have almost superceded new divinity in some parts of our country. We believe that in future, it must be indebted to its connection with orthodox denominations for its increase. It would be little short of madness in this party to desire a very early separation from their orthodox brethren. Such a separation would at once stop all accessions from the opposite ranks; it would make all their arts of concealment and party tactics useless. More: a party may for a while conceal their distinguishing tenets; a denomination cannot. Now, after such solemn denials of Pelagian views and professions of New-England orthodoxy on the part of the leaders and influential members and all the partizans of this conspiracy against orthodoxy, after denying so indignantly the charges of their brethren, it would require a hardihood which we hope they do not possess, to come out, and in the face of the world give the lie to their own professions, and justify the honesty of their opposers.

Those artificial excitements which gave increase and popularity to this party, but brought revivals, ordinances, and religion itself into lasting disrepute, can do little more for it where the sentiments of decent people are generally against these movements; and as these innovators have rested the truth of their opinions on their success in converting sinners, when it shall be found that they can no longer succeed in this, and heretofore have only deluded them, their popularity must decline as fast as it increased.

We believe that there exists in this party such a license of speculation, such a want of respect for the Bible and the institutions of the gospel, that its materials are so heterogeneous, that, left to itself, instead of one, it would soon be more than two or three denominations.

Great numbers who at present act with that party are

not fully acquainted with their views ; still more who have embraced them have done it in times of excitement and without calm and laborious examination, and need but to come to act with their accustomed deliberation to renounce them.

But we have no doubt that there exists aside from these a very numerous and disciplined party, decidedly hostile to the fundamental principles of the gospel ; who have been acting with concert and consummate skill ; who are now maturing the plans which they have been forming for years, and who, should they succeed, will very shortly place almost every literary and theological seminary in the hands of those unfriendly to evangelical religion. It is a party which idolizes philosophy, and looks on the doctrines of the gospel with the most perfect scorn ; it is perfectly hostile to those who hold them, and is reckless of the means employed to crush them. This dark conspiracy against divine truth can be successfully opposed only by an organized, systematic action, and union among the friends of the gospel. With such men, it is clear the friends of truth cannot long maintain even the semblance of an union. It is from these men alone, if they act with firmness, that the orthodox will encounter opposition. For notwithstanding all the party tactics which have been put in requisition, notwithstanding the influence of new measures and the various artifices to delude sinners into a hope, we believe that nothing has contributed more to the growth of this party than the silence of the orthodox with regard to the true nature of these opinions, and the indirect countenance given by distinguished men to those engaged in propagating them. If their brethren are innocent of teaching dangerous errors, let them speak out and relieve them from the suspicions under which they labour, and give them full countenance in teaching the truth. Let them speak out, and restore public confidence. But if they are guilty, let them speak out, and destroy that fatal confidence which is betraying the unwary ; let them alarm those who have been in part carried away, and who will give its due weight to their opinions ; let them but speak and there will soon be a union among those who still study and respect the Bible, the only union desirable ; a union in the belief and love of the great doctrines of the gospel ; while those who have been pleading for union in order to make division, a division which must ere long be total, permanent,

and eternal, will either conceal their heresy within their own breasts, or quit the communion of those who cannot tolerate fundamental error in the Church without becoming partners in its guilt.

We design to make some passing remarks on the fundamental proposition of the New-Haven divines, which is a denial of the original righteousness in which Adam was created, and the original sin, or, in other words, the corrupt nature, which his posterity inherit from him in consequence of his apostasy. These divines harmonize with the ancient Pelagians, in denying that man has inherited from Adam a sinful nature, or any sinful propensity; they assert that man now comes into the world with the same nature in kind, though not in degree, with that which Adam possessed at his creation, and that mankind make to themselves sinful hearts, as Adam, according to them, made to himself a holy one. We design from their positive declarations, and the general strain of their reasoning, to show that the fundamental doctrine in the evangelical system has been abandoned.

As we shall make frequent use of the term volition, and what are generally called acts of the will, to prevent all misunderstanding among our readers, we shall stop and define our terms. By an imperative act of volition we mean such an act as both the mind and body obey so far, as they acknowledge allegiance to the will. This causes the external motions of the body, which fulfil the purposes of the mind. But as the same external motions may be made from different and even opposite affections, or subjective motives, these imperative volitions are not regarded by divines as possessing in themselves a moral nature, though we in a certain sense ascribe to them the moral character of the affections from which they proceed. Many metaphysicians regard these alone as acts of the will.

By a moral purpose, resolution, or determination, we mean that act of the mind which terminates on some action or course of action: its end is always the procurement or removal of some of the objects of the moral affections, and is the result of deliberation or of persuasion addressed to these. This and imperative volition intervene between an act of the moral affections, and that external action which is but a visible expression of them. It is always prompted by these, and from these we determine its character—the same resolution to an action or course of action may be the result

of different and even of opposite subjective motives in the same mind, and of opposite motives in different individuals. For instance, the resolution to pursue a course of theological study may be commenced from one class of motives, and pursued from the opposite. A purpose is not of itself of a moral nature, but in a sense we say it borrows one from the character of those affections which precede it, and whose gratification it always proposes.

Thirdly. There are in the mind moral affections, or if you choose, moral preferences for some moral object, preferences for the object itself, and not some circumstance or appendage connected with it; that is, the thing itself is really the object of choice; it has within itself the very qualities and excellencies, and all the qualities and excellencies for which it appears worthy of choice. We shall apply the simple term volitions to these alone, and denote the first class by the terms imperate volitions. We regard volitions as the only mental operations which are of a moral nature, as right or wrong in themselves. These are the only things in man which are really of a voluntary nature, all the mental operations that God has made the subject of direct command or prohibition.

We are aware that there exists in every human mind a disposition to consider as voluntary in its nature, not volition itself, but that which is the bare effect of it, and which from definition is not voluntary. We say that an action is voluntary simply because that it is an external expression of the acts of the will, separate from which, it is nothing but motion. The fact, then, that our external motions which are the expression of internal affections, and the effect of imperate volition, are called voluntary; that from our earliest years we have been accustomed to call that voluntary which is barely the effect of volition; this becomes the occasion of a strong impression in the mind that whatever is free and voluntary, must be produced by volition.—This absurd axiom follows us through all our reasonings, and unless we are always on our guard, must constantly mislead us. It is this alone which gives plausibility to the reasonings of Arminians and Pelagians.

We believe that there are mental acts which are in their own nature voluntary; which derive no voluntariness from preceding acts, and communicate none to succeeding ones; which are not the objects of choice, but choice itself, not

produced by any separate act of our efficiency, but wholly by objective motives ; that the highest liberty which we can conceive, is exercised in these, that they are the sources of all our conceptions of liberty.

If an act be not voluntary in its own nature it is inconceivable that it can ever become so ; and even could we suppose voluntariness a communicable quality, and suppose it derived from a preceding act, which imparted this quality to an act not then in existence—yet that preceding act must have voluntariness in itself, and enough to communicate to another ; or if that have derived this quality, we come to a series of acts which have successively transmitted this quality, and unless this series be endless, none of these acts can be free.

But though the proposition that a moral act can derive its voluntariness from a preceding act of the will, carries its absurdity so plain on the face of it that a bare statement is a refutation of it : yet it is one which the followers of Dr. Taylor generally adopt, and which, while some of their leaders openly avow—yet others more cautious, use language which the bulk of their readers regard as teaching the same thing, yet which others who regard the proposition that the will must have power over its own acts as untenable and absurd, find so ambiguous as to be capable with some violence of a different interpretation.

In proof of our assertions we shall first cite Mr. Finney, who has taught Dr. Taylor's system with as much boldness as almost any other, certainly as fast as public sentiment would bear it ; in whose preaching its moral influence may be fully seen, and who, in his perfectionism, has given the true explanation of what is artfully called natural ability, and pushed the system to its legitimate results.

"People," says Mr. Finney, "people talk about *religious feeling* as if they could, *by direct effort*, call forth emotion.—These emotions are *purely involuntary states of the mind*. But they can be controulled *indirectly*, otherwise there would be *no moral character* in our *emotions*, if there were not a way to controul them. Let a man call up his enemy before his mind, and his feelings of enmity will rise. If a person be "a friend of God, let him contemplate God as a gracious and holy being, and he will have emotions of friendship kindled up in his mind. If he is an enemy of God, only let him set the true character of God before his

mind, and look at it, and fasten his attention on it, and his enmity will rise against God. *So any action, thought, or feeling, to have a moral character, must be directly or indirectly under the controul of the will.* If a man place himself under circumstances where virtuous emotions are called forth, he is praiseworthy in the exercise of them **PRECISELY IN PROPORTION** to his voluntariness in bringing his mind into circumstances to cause their existence."

Here is a remarkable proposition in this new philosophy of the orthodox doctrines. God has placed the whole substance of his law in certain emotions which are purely involuntary, and have in themselves no moral character, but are said to borrow one from the circumstance of having an indirect connection with an imperate volition. "The emotions in which he includes love to God," he says, "are purely involuntary states of the mind, but they can be controulled indirectly, otherwise there would be no moral character in our emotions." Here we are expressly told that all holiness in God, and all that he has required of his creatures is involuntary, and has in itself no moral character. All holiness is said to be involuntary, and in itself of no moral value whatever, more than those motions of our limbs which proceed from volition. But if voluntariness and moral qualities are literally transferrible, let us inquire of this new teacher what that act of the mind is which can impart these qualities to holiness itself? Holiness in itself has no moral value. What is it that communicates to it this all-important quality? We will hear Mr. Finney. "*If a man voluntarily place himself under such circumstances as to call wicked emotions into exercise, he is entirely responsible for them.* If he place himself under circumstances where virtuous emotions are called forth, he is praiseworthy in the exercise of them;" and how far? "*precisely in proportion to his voluntariness in bringing his mind into circumstances to cause their existence.*" What, then, is this mysterious act which has both voluntariness and a moral nature in itself? which imparts these qualities to other acts. It of course does not borrow these qualities from any preceding acts, not from holy or sinful affections certainly, for it is to these that it is to communicate its qualities. Why it is a bare imperate act of the will by which we exert an influence over the succeeding acts of the mind. He tells us it is that by which

we call up holy or sinful objects of thought, and it is the same act in both cases, but which imparts opposite qualities.

It had been the custom of divines of the old school, in a certain sense to say, that love to God imparts a moral quality to imperate volitions; here we are assured that imperate volitions impart all its moral value to love to God; more, that they impart opposite qualities to emotions which agree in possessing no moral quality whatever. "For many centuries," says Mr. Finney, "but little of the real gospel has been preached." The Reformers, he tells us, "were continually interpreting the word of God according to the systems of mental philosophy that then prevailed;" they introduced into it embarrassments and contradiction, mystery and absurdity; "consequently the gospel had not yet its primitive effect." Here comes the great Reformer of the Reformers, who is to set all things right. And what is his great distinguishing doctrine? (The above may be called such if any,) and what is it? Why, that the law of God requires nothing that has any moral character, nothing that is even voluntary; that holiness and sin in themselves differ not at all in moral qualities, because they possess no such qualities.

How natural it is that a person should become a perfectionist who has explained away the law of God; perfectionism and antinomianism differ only in name. What infidel in any Christian land has maligned the great doctrines of the Reformation with such zeal and success as Mr. Finney? What infidel has exerted himself with so much zeal and success in destroying the influence of the evangelical clergy of this country? We venture to say, the influence of all united, has not been so great in these respects as his. And what wonder that the doctrines of the gospel, and those who preach them, should be opposed by those who have explained away the law?

We have here a specimen of the utter recklessness of this philosophy. It takes the most presumptuous liberties with the word of God, under pretence of removing difficulties, but really to develope its own principles. For, after the doctrines and precepts of revelation have been refined away, we find all the difficulties still remaining. After denying that God's requirements are of a moral or voluntary nature, he is still forced to admit that there are acts of the

human mind which possess these qualities in themselves, without borrowing them from preceding volitions; more, that they communicate these qualities to those acts which God has comprehended in man's duty. Rather than admit the affections of love to God; &c., which this philosophy classes with the animal propensities, to be of a moral character, it denies that God has required any thing of man which is of a voluntary or moral nature. It admits that there are acts of the human mind which possess these qualities, but then God has not required them. The Bible has placed all spiritual religion, all man's moral obligations in those purely involuntary emotions which Mr. Finney says have in themselves no moral character, and which he is so careful to distinguish from religious principle.

Now, though we believe that Mr. Finney may have been occasionally misunderstood, and unintentionally have communicated truth on this great subject, yet as far as he has succeeded in developing this system, whatever effect he may have had on the passions, he must have paralyzed the consciences of his audience. And we believe that no ten Universalists have succeeded in inspiring so many persons with false and fatal hopes as he has done. This Pelagian system completely explains away all the religious affections.

The same principles on this subject are taught by Miss Beecher in her letters on the difficulties of religion. "It is true we have not the direct controul of our affections, so that by a mere act of volition we can love and hate, just as we can, by an act of our will, either open or shut our eyes. If we love a friend, we cannot by a mere act of choice, cease to feel this affection. If we are indifferent, or dislike a person, we can no more, by any act of volition, change these feelings into love. And I do not suppose that the divine law demands any such attempts." "Now I suppose that we have the controul of our affection as it respects our Maker to an equal extent" that we have "toward a fellow-being, and that we are to exercise it by similar methods." She informs us that we are not to attempt to exercise love by direct volition, but by using the appropriate means, which, as she explains it, is a pretty long course of action. Again: "I am sure God does not require any thing of us but what we have full ability to perform, and I think I see a way of obviating the difficulties you urge." "It seems to

me that *the controul of our emotions* is within our power, and though we cannot controul them by direct volition, as men controul the movement of their limbs, we have an indirect controul that is as efficient and as properly the subject of divine legislation as external actions." Now what is it which is so carefully distinguished from volitions, which is within our power, and which consequently God has a right to require? What does she say is as properly the subject of divine command as *the external actions*? Is it the emotions, as she terms the love of God, is it the *emotions themselves*?

No such thing, it is only *the controul* of the emotions. Generally we should as soon think of meddling with the fashion of a lady's head dress as with her theology. We regret to say that the former has more interest with that sex, and attraction with ours than the latter; but some circumstances entitle her views of this system to more than common attention, and her fine talents seem but too well calculated to give currency to errors that we think serious. She has, however, imposed on mankind a much severer task than Mr. Finney. We think it, however, one quite within the compass of their ability, and have no doubt that they may find considerable leisure for works of supererogation. It is true, some of our older divines have felt somewhat awkward in being handed over the quagmires of metaphysical divinity by a lady; and though some of her theological brethren have not felt all the aid they could have wished, have even flounced where they could feel no bottom, yet they have generally been disposed to take the will for the deed; for ourselves, we think the lady has performed even more than she promised; she has here, if we understand her, removed not merely its difficulties, but religion itself.

We hear the same views advanced in the pulpits of the New School. The Christian graces, those spiritual affections which are the substance of the divine precepts, to which all the commands of external obedience have primary reference, we now hear them called emotions, constitutional sensibilities, and susceptibilities; we hear them classed with the instincts which belong to us as animals, so far as concerns their moral or voluntary nature; it is even found necessary to tell us how we may call them up into action.

Now what does the Bible make the matter of command, the exercise of the affections themselves? What do these

divines make the matter of their exhortations? Not the emotions themselves, but only the controul of them. We have heard it asserted that all virtue consists in some mysterious command over the affections.—It has heretofore been the belief of Christians, that all sin consists in being governed in the actions or imperate volitions by sinful affections, and all virtue in being governed by those that are virtuous. Whether there be any virtue in these affections or not, we believe that it is pretty generally acknowledged that they are the subjective motives of all external action.—The system of these divines denies that we have inherited any sinful affections from Adam; it considers all the native affections of the human mind as constitutional, and purely involuntary and innocent; as, however, they are found useful in influencing the external conduct, and are evidently the subject of divine precept, it is found convenient to assign them the moral character which belongs to that imperate volition which calls them up, and which is the same whether it call up a holy object or a sinful one; whether it incite to virtuous or vicious conduct.

It seems that these preachers are forced to allow that there are some mental acts which have voluntariness and moral qualities in themselves, though those which are the subject of the divine commands have neither. There is no voluntariness, freedom, or moral worth in the exercise of the affections themselves, but only in the imperate acts which call up their objects; and as there is no moral value in God's commands, as it all resides in this commandment of men, these divines who are so sceptical on the subject of imputation, suppose, that as here is an indirect connection between these two classes of acts, the moral qualities of one are in some mysterious way transfused into the other.

Arminians and Pelagians heretofore had placed all freedom and virtue not in volition itself, but in regulating and controulling volition; the will found all its employment in regulating its own acts; these preachers place it in regulating what is purely involuntary, which certainly stands in more need of some regulation. When once human freedom is placed not in exercising volition, but in controulling it, when virtue is made not volition itself, but the mere object of volition—it will soon be regarded as something purely the object of human powers, as something perfectly under human controul, and the natural and necessary consequence of

such a system is perfectionism. This was the case with Celestius, the disciple of Pelagius, as a few quotations may show. We shall see that freedom from sin, or perfect obedience in this system, is not so much the exercise of volition as the object of it, as the direct object of human power, and perfectly within man's controul.

"Iterum quaerendum est *quomodo* non potest homo sine peccato esse, *voluntate* an *natura*. Si *natura*, peccatum non est; si *voluntate* PERFACILE potest *voluntas* VOLUNTATE mutari." Here perfectionism is deduced from the proposition, that the will has the power to controul its volitions with all imaginable ease; that man can change his voluntary preference. "Iterum quaerendum est, utrumne debeat homo sine peccato esse. Procul dubio debet; si debet, potest, si non potest ergo non debet." Now what is the object of this "potest?" Why perfectionism, "sine peccato esse." "Iterum quaerendum est per quid homo efficitur cum peccato, per naturæ necessitatem, au per arbitrii libertatem. Si per naturæ necessitatem, culpa caret: Si per arbitrii libertatem, quaerendum est a quo ipsam arbitrii libertatem acceperit. Procul dubio a Deo. Deus autem quod dedit certe bonum est, negari non potest. Qua igitur ratione bonum probatur *si magis ad malum quam ad bonum primum est?*" Celestius teaches only that man has no more propensity to sin than to holiness, his views of human nature are not so high as Dr. Taylor's, who in the following sentences, will not allow that man has any propensity to sin whatever. "We suppose Dr. Tyler to believe as others who have advanced the same theory maintain, that this propensity to sin is itself sinful." "With such a propensity, man has not a natural ability to avoid sin. This is alike true, whether this propensity be supposed to be sinful or innocent." Any propensity to sin, innocent or sinful, then would destroy human accountability. This, then, is the philosophical explanation of the doctrine of original sin or native depravity, as expressed in the Saybrook platform. Now what is the meaning of natural ability, of which Dr. Taylor here speaks? What does he tell us is the object of this ability?—Why, "it is ability to avoid sin," or to be holy, and what is the object of the power of which Celestius speaks, "sine peccato" esse, to be without sin. They both mean the same thing. Dr. Taylor is more crafty in the use of terms.

Now what must be the result of such doctrine? The

ancient Pelagians taught that men only do more easily with grace what they could very well do without it, and the same sentiment is conveyed in almost the same words by the New-Haven divines. The general influence of this kind of preaching is to inspire men with the most presumptuous confidence in their own powers. So far from feeling any necessity for divine grace, they feel that it is very seldom they have occasion to exert their own powers. The general impression seems to be that, when at leisure from more laborious duties and occupations, a man can change his heart quite at his ease ; and why not change it as easily as make it ?

Growth in grace used to be considered as the fruit of long-continued private prayer, meditation, and study of the word of God ; of constant jealousy over the heart, mortification of his sinful affections, of persevering exertions to conform every action to the divine will. But how is it now ? We remember lately hearing a young divine very gravely request his church to become eminently pious before they left their seats. At a time when Dr. Taylor was attending a protracted meeting in the eastern part of Massachusetts, it was the custom after sermon to allow the congregation from five to seven minutes to change their voluntary preference. They were requested to begin by leaning their heads against the seat before them. It reminded us of the firm position taken by a certain class of insects when about to burst their shell, and emerge into a perfect state. It seemed to be the understanding that the complete saint lay concealed in the sinner ; that only a little resolution was required to cast off the shell of external irregularity, and he emerged at once into the airy regions of new divinity, an exhorter, a reformer, or a perfectionist, as the notion chanced to take him.

President Edwards has fully shown that human liberty does not consist in the will's decreeing its own acts ; he has demonstrated that if each free act of the will derive its freedom from being produced by a preceding free act, that the same must be true of that preceding act, and we are led back to the first, which, not being the effect of a preceding free act, destroys the freedom of its successor, and this in its turn disenfranchises the next, till all lose their freedom ; and this Arminian method for the abolition of the slavery of the

will, this new plan of giving freedom to human volitions, actually brings them into hopeless servitude.

On this scheme, the will, instead of fixing on moral objects, is wholly occupied with itself; it exists only to regulate its own acts; it has no occupation but to choose its own choices, and choice becomes its own object. The truth is, every volition, so far as any preceding choice of ours is concerned, is strictly spontaneous; it owes its existence not to our choice, but wholly to the efficiency of a motive. Suppose that choice actually produced choice: it would not help the matter: voluntariness cannot be transmitted. But from definition, they are acts of the same kind, and if one could transmit its freedom to the other, it would only bestow charity to one which was already as well off as itself, and reduce itself to want. This theory supposes that volitions are free, not from being what they are, but from being previously chosen to be what they are.

The truth is, all freedom and voluntariness consists not in willing the existence of particular volitions, (which is inconceivable,) but in exercising them: here is all the moral voluntariness that God has required, all that man can possibly exercise all that the human mind can conceive.

Most of the popular teachers of the new theology make virtue something purely involuntary, but however the effect of a volition which has power to communicate its voluntariness. There is, however, a very considerable portion of the party which go a step higher in their views of virtue, and make it consist in volition, but derive its merit from its being determined by preceding volition—they adopt the theory that Edwards has exploded, that the will has power to decree its own volitions, and that this constitutes human liberty. And under what name is this absurd opinion introduced? What name of all others should they give to it to avoid all suspicion? Why it is called natural ability. Dr. Beecher has advanced the theory in his "views of theology." We were struck with that part of his system when we gave a short notice of that work in a former number; we considered those views on that subject as opposed to what he said on every other, but as the language appeared to be loose and ambiguous, as he so clearly taught the opposite; also, as he was giving his views on a most solemn occasion; as he so steadily asserted his adherence to the standards of the

Church, we believed him above artifice and concealment. But he has since given his whole influence to give currency to that system which he then meant to be understood to disclaim; he has more than once claimed the honour of being its inventor.

Some persons have the skill to communicate error without even exciting suspicion. Those who receive it, do not even dream of what they are imbibing. They are secretly and steadily drawn over to the new opinions, when they all the while appear to themselves to be going in the contrary direction, as Cacus drew his victims to his den backwards, "*cauda in speluncam tractos*." We do not wonder that careless observers, who see the tracks all going the other way, should cherish the hope that all are deserting the new party; yet rightly viewed, it is proof that they are fast recruiting their ranks. It is not enough to look to see which way a man faces, we must wait to see which way he moves. Proselyters now-a-days, like the eminent one which Virgil so well describes, take the precaution to bring in their converts backwards, and we know of no surer mark by which one of their disciples may be known, than his always facing in one direction, and moving in the opposite.

Dr. Beecher has sometimes defined this mysterious natural ability as being "a capacity of choice, with power of contrary choice." By these terms he does not mean the faculty of the will by which we are able to choose at all; he means a mysterious power which the mind has over its choices. He uniformly in his discussion, represents moral opposites as the objects of choice. With these, (if there be any such thing as moral inability,) where one is the object of preference, the other is the object of equal aversion. It is not enough for him that a person have the power to choose one of moral opposites, he must also have the power to choose the other. His notions of liberty are as high as those of the Irish suitor who was to choose between two heiresses, it was not enough to have power to choose one, he must be able to choose the other likewise. It is power to love an object or its opposite, just as best suits us, to love an object or hate it, as we choose. Having then, as much power to love one as another, the mind must determine to which it will be favourably inclined. It determines what shall be its choices. This he soon asserts in so many words, and repeatedly.

Now, what ideas had President Edwards of natural ability or human liberty, did he make it consist in being able to will as we please, or in being able to do as we please. That mighty genius shows the absurdity of the notion that the will determines its own acts so clearly, that none have attempted to oppose his reasonings; he has showed that no higher liberty is even conceivable than "a man's having power or opportunity to do as he pleases."

Now, how does President Edwards define natural ability and inability—"We are said to be naturally unable to do a thing when we cannot do it if we will;" natural ability, then, must consist in being able to do it if we will. What, then, is the object of this ability? Is it something voluntary or involuntary? Did he after all make volition the object of volition? Far from it.

But what is the object of natural ability as understood by Dr. Beecher? It is to direct what particular choices shall take place, to determine what volitions shall arise in the mind. "Men," he says, "associate blame always on the supposition that they were able to have chosen otherwise." He is not contending for the existence of the faculty of the will, or the power by which we choose at all, it is a power to determine what its choices shall be. "The question," he says, "is not whether a man chooses; this is notorious, and none deny it; but whether it be the act of an agent who MIGHT HAVE ABSTAINED from the choice that he made, and made one which he did not." "But I say that the theory that a man cannot help choosing what he does choose, and can by no possibility choose otherwise, is the doctrine of fatalism in all its forms."

But what is it that this natural ability is to controul? Why, it is the voluntary acts of the mind, choice itself. Hear the answer: "But convince men that choice is an effect over which *the mind has no more controul* than over the drops of rain; and the common sense of the world would revolt against the accountability of *choice* merely because it was *choice*." There is no freedom, then, in choice itself, but in having a controul over it. Now what is the real alternative, if a man have not this controul over his choice? He tells us: "But I say that the theory of choice that it is what it is by a natural necessity, and that a man cannot help choosing what he does choose, and can by no possibility choose otherwise, is the doctrine of fatalism in all

its forms." Then if choice be not what it is by natural necessity, the man can choose otherwise than he does choose, and unless he have this power, choice is the effect of natural necessity. But it is clear that the bare possession of a power to make choice what it is, does not make it such, unless it be exercised. And Dr. Beecher dared not say that it ever is exercised. He tells us choice must be the effect of natural necessity, or of something else; but does he tell us of what? He says only, or the mind must have power to make it what it is. But he plainly tells us, however, that freedom is not exercised in choice, but consists in having power to controul it. Now it matters not how much freedom the mind has, it performs no free acts, unless this freedom be exercised. Choice itself, then, is not a free act; the only free act is that which controuls it; and if it be not under this controul, it must be the effect of natural necessity. He all along makes this the alternative—choice must be under the controul of the mind, that is the effect of this natural ability, or else of natural necessity; it must be what it is, by this natural necessity or the mind's controul over it.

Now if the mind possess the power of determining what its volitions shall be, if it exert this power, it must be by some act of power; if it determine them, it must be by some act of determination; if it give one act of choice the preference to another, it must be from seeing some reason for it, some reason that makes it appear preferable, it must be some act of preference. Choice, then, becomes its own object.

But this determining choice is not free unless it be itself determined by definition; and we must pursue liberty through successive choices which have been fixed by preceding ones, till we arrive at one which had no predecessor to determine it, and at the end of our journey we find that we have been pursuing a phantom, a liberty which does not and cannot exist.

In this very reasoning, we betray ourselves, and show that we regard choice as free in its own nature. For if this act be not free, what shall make it so? Why, being the effect of preceding choice: here, then, we acknowledge an act of choice to be free in itself, and to have liberty enough to make its neighbour free. If there be any freedom in choice, it must reside in the act itself, and not in its cause;

if moral acts are free, they must be so in themselves, and not in their causes. If the soul exercises liberty, it must be in her moral acts themselves, and not in determining them. If the soul do not exercise liberty in moral acts, those acts are not free. And should we suppose the soul to have power to determine its acts of choice, it could be done by nothing that is freer than choice itself; we are obliged at last to admit that choice has in itself liberty enough and to spare. But we don't regard it a valuable discovery of Dr. Beecher, that the mind does not exercise liberty in virtue but only in acts previous to it.

It has been the habit of late to use the distinction of moral and natural ability to establish the existence of moral obligation; all such attempts must fail, and only serve to bring first principles into suspicion. The truth is, God has not left the belief of human accountability to the mercy of our subtile distinctions and presumptuous use of reason; he has written his law on the heart. Conscience teaches us this truth, and it is impossible for reason to give it any confirmation. It had always been believed that want of natural ability excuses a man only when there is a moral ability—that nothing can excuse the want of this: till lately no one attempted to prove that this moral ability must exist; this was taken for granted, and this admission gave all their cogency to reasonings on this subject. This moral ability, when we come to the spiritual precepts of the Bible, is the very thing required. The whole law requires only what is called moral ability. But now, it seems, we must inquire if a moral agent has natural ability to do an action, and then if he have natural ability to will it? When once we have admitted that a man has a will by which he is capable of choosing at all, which Dr. Beecher expressly admits by conceding the existence of choice, to claim any higher ability as necessary to accountability, an ability not merely to choose but to determine what choice we will have, is to bring human accountability into suspicion.

It has been a matter of regret to see Dr. Beecher all along endeavouring to fix on those who deny the will this self-determining power, the charge of believing that choice, a moral effect, is the result of a natural instead of a moral cause. He could not be ignorant that President Edwards had demonstrated the absurdity of this sovereignty of the will over its own volitions—and shown likewise that choice

is always an effect : the effect of a moral cause—of the influence which an objective motive exerts on the will, without any efficiency of ours to give it efficacy.

Now how could any infidel show a more decided determination to ridicule the idea that there is anything like freedom or moral worth or demerit in moral acts themselves, than he has done in the description of that machinery which he represents as having not only life and intelligence, but the power of choice, enabling it voluntarily to utter praises and blasphemies. Here is proof by diagram. True, says he, they blaspheme voluntarily; there is choice and understanding; here are moral actions; here are the worst crimes done intelligently and voluntarily, but there is no guilt in them; why? because there is not that controul over volition, which alone can give it freedom and moral worth; now here are freedom and moral worth allowed to exist, but taken from virtue and placed in certain previous mental acts, acts which regulate and give moral value to their successors. Here is moral necessity; a moral cause is also allowed. For unless choice be an effect, an effect of a moral cause that is of a preceding volition to make it what it is, there is no liberty.

Not only has he attempted to give the impression, that to deny the existence of this self-determining power, is to hold to natural necessity; but he attempts to make this self-determining power matter of divine revelation. "It has been insisted by some," says he, "that, in looking for the ground of accountability, men never go beyond the fact itself of voluntariness. If the deed, whether good or evil, be voluntary, that satisfies. It does; but it is because all men include unfailingly both *in their theory and consciousness*, the supposition of powers of agency unhindered and uncoerced by any fatal necessity." And what is meant by such powers of agency? Why, the sovereignty over our own volitions. "Now I believe that the natural constitution, and universal feelings and perceptions of men *are the voice of God speaking the truth*; and if the truth is not here, where may we expect to find it?"

We think this a rather bold commencement to bring out the self-determining power of the will in the very first chapter of this new revelation from human consciousness. As the new system, like one of its predecessors, will probably be given out in separate leaves, as fast as the community

is able to bear it, we are not sorry that this doctrine comes first.

We think it sufficiently bold to come forth and defend what almost the whole theological world has branded as an absurdity ; but to say that God has written it on the human heart, is little less than blasphemous.—We are sorry that Dr. Beecher pretends to any such revelations. Divines have indeed regarded volition as an effect ; the effect of a moral cause. In every act of preference there is something preferred, some moral object is viewed with something beyond indifference, with either love or aversion—the object itself is preferred for its excellence, or disliked for opposite qualities. The object itself produces this effect in us without our voluntary efficiency : for if it owed its influence to volition on our part, here would be in this assisting volition something preferred, and some other object of a moral nature, if the act have any moral worth. But we believe all the moral worth, all moral voluntariness and moral activity, lie in preferring the object : we don't inquire how the mind comes by this pleasure ; and if it were by prior choice, i. e., if we choose this, by previously choosing some other object, that act, so far from relieving the difficulties we have in this, would contain the same in itself.

But we regard the great problem which the New-Haven divines would solve to be this : how does any moral object become agreeable to us or otherwise, an object of love or aversion, how shall it have any power as a motive. They attempt to give the impression that it is by deliberation that this takes place. Now deliberation must always be the result of a previous volition, in which a motive has had influence already. Deliberation makes no object agreeable or otherwise. That process of the understanding by which we determine among several agreeable objects which is most agreeable, or among others of a contrary nature, which is most the object of our aversion, does not itself make any of them to be agreeable or otherwise, and consequently does not make one object more pleasing to us than another. Deliberation, to have any merit in it, must not at all respect the pleasantness of the proposed objects ; we should deliberate, not to ascertain which is most congenial with the constitutional desire of happiness, but only to find what is duty, what is right ; after this, all deliberation is positively sinful.

Besides, in deliberation the simple moral objects do not come up before the mind. A holy person does not, dares not deliberate between a holy object and a sinful one : he has long ago decided the question ; neither does the sinner debate this question. The truth is, those things which in vague language we say are the objects of deliberative volition, are very compound. They contain such a variety of moral objects, that they are chosen from different and even opposite subjective motives. Very many of the things which we are said to choose, are not themselves at all the ultimate objects upon which choice terminates. The murderer, previous to the act, prefers a potion of brandy to one of wine, his knife to his pistol, a quick pace to a slow one—to use soft words rather than rough—but are these the real objects of choice ? after his act, he would perhaps prefer wine to brandy, a pistol to a knife, a slow pace to a violent one. The real object of his choice all the while has been those things which are the objects of the passions of covetousness or revenge. That choice which fixes on a moral object, is always the action of a moral affection. How many moral objects come up before the mind in choosing a course of action, or even a single action ! But an action separate from an act of moral choice, is nothing but external motion. In reality, actions are not the ultimate objects of choice, and the acts of the immanent affections alone really fix on these moral objects. This was the opinion of President Edwards.

“ It is agreeable to the sense of men in all nations and ages, not only that the fruit or effect of a good choice is virtuous, but that the good choice itself from whence that effect proceeds is so ; yea, also the antecedent good disposition, temper, or affection of mind, FROM WHENCE proceeds that good choice, is virtuous.” “ Human nature must be created with some dispositions, otherwise it must be without any such thing as inclination or will, perfectly indifferent, without preference, without choice or aversion towards any thing as agreeable or disagreeable.” Moral objects are the ultimate objects of the innate moral affections, and an action or choice is virtuous no farther than it proceeds *from*, and implies an act of these immanent affections.

Here President Edwards assures us, that it is only from the innate affections that acts of deliberate choice proceed,

and from these acts of choice, moral actions. He tells us that without these, no object would be agreeable or otherwise: he elsewhere tells us that these affections, from whence proceed choice and action, *are the will*.

The great difficulty of the New-Haven divines is in regard to the existence of a will, by which any object should appear pleasing, and excite volition: any thing permanent in the mind to which motives are addressed, any affection by which they appear agreeable or otherwise: they seem to doubt the existence of any thing back of choice, any faculty by which we will. Edwards says: "*The faculty of the will* is that power or principle of the mind by which we are capable of choosing; *an act of the will* is the same as an act of choice." When we come to the definition of what is really meant by choice; that it is preference of something; that it is pleasure in, or aversion to, some moral object, this is not enough.—These simple feelings may be innate and constitutional; it is no matter what they are *in their nature*—they must look to *their cause*. How did we come by them? These champions of choice are not satisfied that it consists in preferring some object. They insist that the mind's being pleased with a thing is not enough—it must have power first to determine that it will be pleased with any thing, and then with what thing in particular. Now if the act of an immanent affection be love or aversion to a moral object, it is moral preference from definition, and we give it its name from its nature, not from its cause. We determine it to be volition, without inquiry whether it be the action of an inherited or of a divinely implanted principle, to which motives are addressed, and to which they owe their efficacy; or whether there be nothing back of the act of choice, and the act be owing to the immediate efficiency of God himself.

If all voluntariness, freedom, and moral good desert are contained in these volitions, all that is required or conceivable, then in order to determine human accountability, it is not necessary to inquire how man comes by these volitions. They are certainly spontaneous as far as any preceding volitions of his are concerned; and if he have no virtuous activity in producing them, it is not necessary to inquire whether they be the operations of innate affections, the result of deliberation, or the effect of immediate divine efficiency, in order to determine their moral character.

Were we to suppose them the result of previous volition, we only double the difficulties by that hypothesis.

With regard, then, to the proposition that virtuous actions of the mind have their voluntariness in themselves, we see certain new views advanced. By many the moral affections are said to be purely involuntary, and to borrow their voluntariness from an imperate act of the will. This is far the most general opinion in the party. Dr. Beecher openly denies the existence of any freedom or moral qualities in virtuous or vicious acts of choice, in praise or blasphemy, and places these qualities in a certain mysterious power which the mind has over these acts. These sentiments are maintained to carry out their system in its denial of native depravity.

It has always been the opinion of the Church, that all the voluntariness, freedom, and virtuous activity which are required, or can be conceived, exist in virtuous acts themselves.

We will now state a second proposition, which the New School, we think, very extensively deny.

That there are certain mental acts possessing something beyond voluntariness, a moral character in themselves aside from their causes, that there are two classes of these acts, the opposites of each other, one of which God views with complacence, the other such as he regards with aversion and as deserving the sentence of his law.

It may seem at first sight strange that all virtue or vice should consist in preferring an object, or having an aversion to it, in love or hatred : unless we had a conscience, it would seem strange that there should be any moral worth or demerit in any act of the mind whatever. It has been the doctrine of the Church, that God originally created man with holy affections which he would have transmitted ; but that since the fall, he inherits the sinful affections which then existed in the first parents. If this be not the fact, and we would disprove it by philosophy, then we have a difficult problem to solve. It would seem strange to our weak minds, that certain classes of acts of which the mind has never been conscious, and of which consequently it cannot form even a conception, should be made matter of command or prohibition.—How shall it be able to delight in either object proposed to it ? The objects are such that if one be loved, the other must be hated ; yet the mind, hav-

ing no disposition towards either, is to determine which it will most delight in, and this act of previous choice or determination has no merit in it, not being the one required. Now whether moral acts are the operation of affections created in man, or whether he first choose the existence of such acts, it amounts to the same thing, the determined choice has all the merit, and the determining one none whatever.

But we object to all attempts to solve this problem how moral objects come to affect the will at all, so as to put it out of a state of indifference: they remove no difficulty, but they explain away every thing of an accountable nature in the operations of the human mind. These theorists, denying that man was first created with holy dispositions of heart, and that he now inherits sinful ones, cannot explain how he delights in moral objects at all. The objects proposed are so opposite, that it is eternal death to choose one, and the commencement of eternal life to choose the other; man possesses no moral nature; he is alike indifferent to both; yet he himself is to put himself out of this state of indifference, and choose one or the other, and this is holiness or sin. The whole virtue, on their scheme, is *to put himself* by a separate act, *out* of a state of indifference to these objects; the whole virtue or demerit, according to the Bible, is *in being out* of such a state of indifference.—We hear these men talk of moral agents choosing between objects, as opposite in their moral qualities as heaven and hell, by a calm act of deliberate comparison, as if they were to decide which they liked best, an apple or an orange, and that before they have ever tasted of either. For the sinner has never yet loved the world, or tasted the excellence of the divine character, according to themselves, when he is called to decide which he likes best. Their doctrine is that it is not from any difference in moral nature that some intelligent beings first love God and others hate him. "Mankind," say they, "come into the world with the same nature in kind as that with which Adam was created." Adam, then, came into the world without a holy nature; and his posterity, they assure us, enter life without a sinful one.

To account for the fact that mankind, without possessing any moral dispositions towards either of the classes of objects, should ever choose at all, they are at last obliged to introduce an innate constitutional principle; and as they

make the same principle the subjective motive by which both holy and sinful objects are chosen, they confound the distinction of right and wrong.

Let us hear Dr. Taylor's explanation of the fact that men choose at all. "This self-love, or desire of happiness, is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice which *supremely fix* on ANY object. In every moral being who forms a moral character, there must be a first moral act of preference or choice. This must respect some one object, God or mammon, as the chief good, or as an object of supreme affection. Now whence comes such choice or preference? The answer which human consciousness gives is, that the being *constituted* with a capacity for happiness, desires to be happy; and, knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived; and as in this respect he *JUDGES* or *estimates* their relative value, so he chooses the one or the other as his chief good." "Of all specific voluntary action, the happiness of the agent in some form, is the ultimate end." "Self-love is the primary cause of all MORAL action." Thus, after admitting the existence of constitutional affection, something *back* of choice, we have the doctrine that the ultimate "end of all voluntary action" in God, in angels, in Cataline, in Judas Iscariot and Buonaparte, has always been precisely the same. So much for the answer which human consciousness, that new revelation so vaunted, gives to a question that the Bible had already decided. We doubt whether Matthias would have ventured such an answer.

The new divinity utterly confounds these classes of moral acts, and gives them the same ultimate object. We don't wonder, that with these new views of spiritual religion, the most shrewd find themselves arrived at perfection in the very beginning of their course; or that the repentance of sinners for their wrong judgement appears to be so soon over. We don't wonder, either, at the great number and rapidity of conversions where this new way of presenting truth is adopted. With the materials with which Dr. Taylor has furnished him to begin with, we should suppose that a man of any tolerable shrewdness, might make a new heart after the fashion of the model which the preacher holds up to him, in considerable less than five minutes, the time generally allowed for this purpose.

We are happy to be able to quote Professor Stuart's

opinion as decidedly opposed to this system. It has been too much the custom for distinguished theologians to consider it as the mark of an enlarged and liberal mind to have no opinion on great theological questions, and no very close connection with those who maintain or those who oppose them. We have heard it related of a noted counterfeiter, that he built his house partly in the United States and partly in Canada. By this means, this very ingenious man could approve of the measures of each government as far as he liked them, without becoming a partizan of either : he, moreover, had it in his power always to be under the administration which at the time happened to suit him best.

A great many able theologians have chosen their position on the line which separates two great theological parties. This has its advantages and its inconveniences. A line is overpassed by a step. For this reason, these men can scarcely stir without being laid hold of and claimed by one party or the other. Professor Stuart observes : " Dr. Tyler has published his pamphlet, which has made an end of the matter as to brother Taylor's regeneration by self-love—a full end. There is no redemption. *All the fog is blown away*, and we have at last a clear and sheer regeneration of the natural man by himself, stimulated by self-love, made out to be the scheme of brother Taylor. **THERE IS NO GETTING ASIDE OF IT.**"

Dr. Porter, speaking of Dr. Taylor's system, says : " His views of self-love cannot stand inquiry. His true benevolence, love to God in its most elementary form, is what ? Regard to one's own happiness. Fuller, in his Gospel, its own Witness, shows this to be *an infidel sentiment* ; and Smalley shows that *Satan is innocent, if an ultimate regard to self is no sin !*"

The great inquiry now, is not what is right, but what will most gratify the constitutional desire of happiness ? We hear that it is gravely debated among Christian divines, whether virtue is to be followed for virtue's sake ; a question that till the reign of luxury, heathen philosophers did not debate. In a theological school, the system is taught, that man never can fix his affections on any higher object than his own happiness.

It was the doctrine of Epicurus, not that virtue was not to be followed, but that it was to be followed, not for its own sake, but for the benefits or pleasure consequent on it ; that

is, that happiness was the summum bonum, that this should be the great object of pursuit. All other sects of heathen philosophy looked upon this, with the utmost abhorrence, and considered it as a formal renunciation of every thing deserving the name of virtue, as an object of pursuit. It is true, Epicurus took care, in teaching a doctrine so revolting to all the moral feelings of the community, to avail himself of ambiguous expressions; the disciples were always complaining that the master was misunderstood: nobody but himself knew what he meant; people did not understand their own language, when Epicureans used it: Cicero says: "do you say I don't know what pleasure means, when all the sparrows perfectly understand it?" Were you, says he, were you just entering upon the duties of a magistracy, would you venture to inform your constituents, that in your decisions, you should be guided uniformly by a regard to your own interest? Would you have the effrontery to tell them that you had always been guided by such aims. Perhaps you would not wish to broach a philosophical theory before a mixed assembly, but would you venture to do it in a court of justice or in the Senate.

Now we will suppose that a missionary, under pretext of preaching the gospel, should obtain a commission from some benevolent institution to carry this system to the heathen. We will suppose that he has selected as the scene of his labours, some community trained up to Spartan notions of contempt for danger, ease, pleasure, and luxury; with the same high sentiments of temperance, justice, and patriotism, and the other virtues. We will suppose, that in an assembly of their aged men, he has expounded his system; that after repeated requests to explain himself, he has at last laid aside his ambiguous language, and in the presence of these exalted characters, glowing with high notions of heathen virtue, ventured to assert, that happiness is the only pursuit to which man should aspire, the only one worthy of him, the only one of which he is capable. That virtue is not to be sought for its own sake, and that it never is; that in reality the virtuous and vicious are driving at the same object, though they take different roads to reach it. After taking time to recover from the shock which the avowal of such detestable sentiments must create in their virtuous minds, and after mature deliberation, we should expect that the preacher would be

summoned to their presence and addressed in language much like the following :

" Young man, be assured that we fully appreciate the mischief you have designed us, and the insult you offer us, in supposing us capable of receiving a system by which we should publicly renounce all respect for virtue in the presence of our wives and children and slaves ; that you blushed when required to explain your dishonest language, that you turned pale on the full avowal of your meaning, has left us the hope, that there are still some lurking remains of shame in your constitution, and that your principles have not as yet been able completely to corrupt your heart. Be assured this is the only reason which has induced us again to admit you to our presence."

" Could you expect to regenerate the heathen world by a doctrine which has twice almost ruined it ? We had hoped that this system was now quite banished from among mankind, and that none but the brutes made it the basis of their actions. We have indeed, in our prisons and galleys some unhappy persons who have been guilty of acting on these detestable principles, but we have never yet met any who had become shameless enough to avow them. Had you brought with you the plague, you might have afflicted our bodies with suffering for a few days, or somewhat shortened the period of a few lives ; but when you attempt to poison our morals, to take away temperance, justice, friendship and patriotism, which alone give dignity and value to life, and which are the true basis on which our happy government rests, be assured we shall insulate you from all intercourse with any who might be infected with your principles, and place you under regulations of more than quarantine severity. We shall permit certain of our criminals to convey you your food, but you are forbidden, on pain of death, to hint a word of your principles to them. We pray our gods, who preside over the interests of our government, to give you a speedy passage from our shores, and be assured, that as we consider an attempt to strip us of honesty, probity, and every manly virtue as more criminal than an attack on our property, that a second visit to these shores, will be met with the punishment that it deserves. You will assure those, who sent you, that though fully sensible of the evil designed us, we are capable of no sentiments towards them but those of pity, and were there any hope of the amendment of a

community which could send so far to corrupt an unoffending people, we should send back certain of our slaves to instruct them in the first principles of morals and humanity."

The New-Haven divines set out by asserting that "mankind come into the world with the same nature in kind as that with which Adam was created." They deny that Adam was created with a holy heart, and that his posterity inherit a sinful one: asserting that the one *made* his holy heart, that the others *make* their sinful ones. Now how comes it that any moral object is chosen? and as there are moral objects diametrically opposed to each other, how happens it, that without any change in a man's nature, he should hate holy objects yesterday, and love them to-day. The objects are the same, and are loved or hated only for their moral excellency. That something back of choice and the cause of choice is the very thing which their philosophy attempts to exhibit; what does Dr. Taylor say is the cause or reason of all choice? Here is the whole mystery. Hear him: "THIS SELF-LOVE OR DESIRE OF HAPPINESS, IS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OR REASON OF ALL ACTS OF PREFERENCE OR CHOICE WHICH SUPREMELY FIX ON ANY OBJECT." Now after all, he is obliged to admit innate affections; the system removes no difficulty, but it does explain away the love of God, and remove his law, and we ask what it leaves? But this is not enough; the system must teach man that his sinful affections and passions are innocent, and the infidel and licentious must be taught that their favourite principles are correct. These divines deny that mankind inherit from Adam any feelings which fix on moral objects, and are themselves sinful. It had always been supposed that ambition, pride, envy, malice, hatred, covetousness, and revenge were of this character. If it be not from any thing in our nature, how does any moral object become the object of love or aversion? What do these divines make the objects of moral choice? They are actions which themselves contain moral choice, if they be any thing more than external motives, or they are series of moral action, or the gratification of what are called constitutional propensities: they are the objects of what may be called deliberative choice, and not those moral objects upon which the moral affections fix.

But how do they deny these passions to be sinful? By explaining the things away and applying the terms to something wholly different. What was considered revenge, is

now called sense of injury ; avarice is called desire of natural good, ambition a constitutional love of approbation ; they tell us not whether it is desire the honour that cometh from men, or that which cometh from God only. But what do they call ambition ? “ The *purpose formed to INDULGE* this constitutional love of approbation, even at the expense of the happiness of others.” Ambition, then, is only a *purpose* to do something ; it is not the love of the praise of men, but the purpose to gratify it, that is sinful. “ The sin lies in the choice to indulge the innocent constitutional feelings against the demands of known duty.” And what do we choose as the ultimate object of our choice, when we choose to gratify these feelings. It is nothing but the object of the feelings themselves.

Now, it has been the belief of the orthodox that man inherits from Adam a heart that manifests itself towards different objects by ambition, pride, envy, revenge and hatred, passions of which all are conscious, which are voluntary in their own nature, and sinful ; the great springs of human actions ; the sources of human purposes and not purposes themselves to gratify innocent propensities. Ambition is certainly an innate passion of the human mind. It is not a cold deliberate purpose of its own gratification, but a restless, vehement, and insatiable thirst for that admiration which attends distinction in wealth, power, honours, great achievements in literature and science, in the arts, in arms, and even in crime. Under its influence, a man will forego all ease and tranquillity, encounter toil and suffering, will sacrifice health, comfort, and even conscience, and make it the great business of his life, to hold for a short time a small space in the opinions of mankind. It is a passion which will not often brook the restraint of conscience or of laws. It leads the person possessed by it to trample on the rights, property, reputation and lives of those who oppose his course, and often its success involves the ruin of liberty, laws, and government. But it is said under proper restraint it is useful : but what will restrain it but some other passion of the same heart ? But it is necessary as a motive to action : but are not love to God and man sufficient motives ? What has Christ said of those who seek honor from men, and not that which cometh from God only ? Its objects are only honours, titles, riches, &c. ; it is but another name for that love of the world which the bible assures us is enmity to God.

Envy is a native passion of the human mind. It is a feeling that is gratified by the faults, the humiliation, the disgrace, the suffering and sometimes the death of the unhappy being who has the misfortune to awaken it. It caused the first murder. It is the express subject of divine prohibition.

Revenge, this is something more than a sense of injury when wronged, it is malice towards the one who has injured us. It is not a purpose which has been the result of deliberation, but a vehement passion : the perception even of an intention to injure us awakens it, and it always plots mischief against its object. No reasoning will prove that revenge is not a native and sinful passion of the human heart. It is gratified with no small mischief, and were it not for the restraints of law, would seldom stop short of the death of its victim. It is directly opposed to the love of our neighbour and the spirit of forgiveness which the gospel requires. Bare hatred to our brother, aside from any purpose to gratify it, is called murder.

Pride is beyond doubt an innate passion of the human heart, which certainly has done mischief enough in the world : it is hardly a purpose—but it is something contrary to evangelical humility, and is called by the Bible “the condemnation of the devil.” Now, are these bare purposes which may be forgotten as soon as formed ; or are they that indwelling sin against which the Christian must struggle till death ?

The New Haven divines had denied that man possesses at his creation any affections or dispositions which fix on moral objects. They were then to solve the problem, that either class of moral objects should become the object of supreme affection to a mind created indifferent to both ; how that, when heaven or hell rests on the decision, a being should uniformly choose what, when chosen, makes him worthy of eternal ruin, and afterwards, without any change in his nature, supremely delight in the moral excellence of God, which had been the object of equal hatred. To decide a problem already determined by the Bible, they have been obliged to confound the distinction between holiness and sin, to explain away the moral affections, to make holiness and sin to consist in the exercise of self-love.

Suppose an intelligent accountable being should be able to look on the infinite excellence and purity of God with indifference, we should pronounce such indifference to be sin : we should say the same, could he behold the objects of sin-

ful volition with indifference : should the mind, by a previous self-determining act, become otherwise than indifferent to these objects there could be no merit or demerit in that act which *places* him out of this state : all holiness or sin consist in *being* out of it.

If all virtue and sin consist in being out of this state of indifference, the inquiry of these divines respects acts of no moral value whatever, more than the beating of our hearts ; and could they bring in by revelation that self-determining power which Edwards banished by argument, it would not at all help the necessities of their system.

In every act of choice there is something chosen, an object of choice, which we call a motive. These motives excite volition, produce acts of the will altogether by their own efficiency : that is, they can owe their influence to no previous choice of ours ; if they do, something must have already been chosen ; a motive must already have had influence ; besides, that one object has been chosen already does not at all account for the fact that another should be afterwards chosen. In a moral being, possessed of a will, motives alone move this will, without any voluntary co-operation on his part.

If motives do not owe their influence to any previous activity on our part, if the mind be moved by them at all, it must be wholly through some *susceptibility* which it has of being moved by them ; there must be some principle in the mind itself, which exists when it does not act : something back of choice and "the reason of it," but distinct from choice as the understanding is distinct from acts of intellection. Dr. Taylor's followers allow something distinct from volition, a power of choice, but they seem to mean by this only a liberty of willing. But there must be a distinct power by which we are able to will, as much as a power by which we are able to understand : a power whose existence is inferred from its acts ; a power to whose existence motives owe their whole influence. The acts of this power are volition. Motives move it without any previous activity of ours ; we have not one will to move another with ; it is altogether absurd to speak of the "voluntary use of the will."

Moral motives have no neutral influence ; they do not produce volitions of no moral character, so that a self-determining power should become necessary at last to decide

how we will be affected by moral objects: such a power could be of no avail. They produce effects which have a moral character in themselves; which have all the voluntariness and moral good or ill desert conceivable in themselves; which are the fulfilment of the law or worthy of its curse. The infinite perfections of God will excite no neutral feelings, but either love or hatred, and it depends on our moral nature of what class these volitions shall be; it depends on those moral affections inherited from Adam, or implanted by grace, whose action is excited by a moral cause.

But, after removing the doctrines of original righteousness and original sin, to make room for this self-determining power, the advocates of this system are still obliged to resort to an innate constitutional affection to account for volition. They have to resort to something back of choice: and their volitions, as they have given up moral affections, always prove to be only determinations to gratify constitutional propensities: they terminate on bare action or a course of action; they have removed the moral affections, and we have left only naked purposes and resolutions. The most common definition they give of the will, is that it is "a fixed purpose or settled preference of the soul." It is then, according to them, an act of the mind, and absurdly said to have a permanent existence. They artfully couple purpose with preference; for though a mental act, a purpose may be said, in a sense, still to exist, as our first belief that three and two make five, always continues; a preference is palpably a momentary act. This fixed purpose or preference, then, is a power of the mind and an act of the mind; the cause of choice, and choice itself.

We regard this system as substantially the same with that of Pelagius and Celestius; but it is unfolded and defended with far less subtilty and elegance than were displayed by its first supporters; we think this system, as it now appears, has little original but what is also absurd. President Edwards, that surpassing genius, who does such honour both to our country and race, had unfolded the laws of the moral world with the same skill with which Newton investigated those of the material; like him, he carried the light of demonstration through all his reasonings; he has left nothing new to be said on the subject. We regard it as presumptuous in any, to suppose that his conclusions will be

relinquished, till his arguments have been formally examined and answered. We are happy, however, to hear that a reaction has commenced in New-Haven itself. We learn that President Day, with his peculiar powers of metaphysical analysis, has fully exposed the absurdity and licentiousness of this system, but with that caution and tenderness which might be expected, both from his disposition and his connection with those who have taught these opinions. We have seen only a few extracts from this work, but we regard it as high evidence of a forgiving spirit, that the Christian Spectator, has spoken so kindly of a book which is said to have given a death-blow to its favourite opinions.

If it be that these divines are exerting their influence to bring the great doctrine of original sin into discredit; to teach that man inherits no sinful affections from Adam, and that God implants no holy ones; that all the passions and affections of human nature are innocent; if they make self-love the basis of all voluntary action; that God and mammon are both loved for the same reason; if they make religion consist only in a mysterious power of restraining the natural propensities, in mere purposes and resolutions; if the sinful heart be only a temporary purpose formed by man himself, and reversed by him alone in regeneration; if they make the heart or will to be a mere momentary act of the mind; and above all, if they represent these opinions as the orthodoxy of New-England, we are sure that we have not spoken on these subjects with undue severity.
